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FIRST THINGS

October 1994
Number 46

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

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Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

The Modern Jewish Condition
Alan L. Mittleman

Judge Not?
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Jungians and Gnostics
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Fidel and the Faithful
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Life at the Intellectual Barricades
James Nuechterlein

Truth and Tolerance
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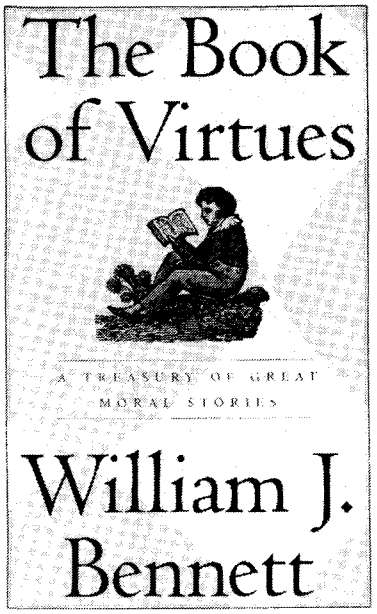

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

OCTOBER 1994 • NUMBER 46

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What Jesus Said

Richard B. Hays' critical analysis of *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* ("The Corrected Jesus," May) was estimable in every way. I would add only a few brief comments.

Hays notes that the criterion of dissimilarity was used by the Jesus Seminar to sort out the authentic words of Jesus, and that this criterion serves to authenticate only those words that are discontinuous with antecedent Jewish tradition and subsequent Christian tradition. The criterion is implied in the very distinction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." The gratuitous assumption that the canonical gospels, despite their obvious confessional character, contain nothing that illumines the historical Jesus is established prior to the reconstruction of the so-called "Jesus of history." What is gratuitously assumed, of course, deserves to be gratuitously rejected by critical audiences. Any distinction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" requires an examination of what is given and taken away a priori in the distinction itself.

Secondly, the scholars of the Jesus Seminar laud their methodology excessively. The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer has pointed out the dangers of method-dependent scholarship. Since the time of Descartes and through the Enlightenment, it has been maintained that method is the guarantor of truth. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer has argued, quite effectively I suggest, that no method is capable of screening the personal prejudices of any interpreter. It is evident from Hays' decisive review that the methodology of the Jesus Seminar itself was apparently designed to promote a particular view of Jesus.

John Dominic Crossan is a cochairman of the Jesus Seminar and author of *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant.* Crossan defends the legitimacy of the Seminar's conjectures and defends his own methodology, one that is close to the approach of the Jesus Seminar. The method, unfortunately, did not save Crossan from self-delusion. The Jesus he reconstructed, in my reading, is a mere conveyance used by Crossan to promote his social vision and political ideology. How peculiar, I thought after reading *The Historical Jesus,* that Crossan's Jesus preached the utopian egalitarianism, the rejection of hierarchical structures, and the liberationist ideology so currently popular on university campuses. Finally, after all these centuries we possess, thanks to Professor Crossan, the actual ideology of the historical Jesus!

Leon McKenzie
Indianapolis, IN

In his review of *The Five Gospels,* Richard B. Hays is too hard on the scholars of the Jesus Seminar in one respect and too easy on them in another.

Hays criticizes the Seminar for its early dating of the extracanonical Gospel of Thomas. His paragraph on this is a study in rhetorical sleight of hand; it begins by calling this choice of date "extraordinar[y]," "controversial," and "[un]traditional," and ends by calling it "implausible"—as if that's the same thing. By not explaining what's implausible about it, Hays implies that this dating is wrong simply because it's fairly new. Yet the hope of any continuing inquiry is that new and better views will, over time, replace old, inadequate ones . . . isn't it?

In fact, an early date for Thomas has been advanced by New Testament scholars outside the Seminar, including some at those "major graduate institutions" Hays mentions. As I understand it, there are textual reasons for believing Thomas might be independent and very old, not the later Gnostic gloss it was traditionally thought to be. More than that, there are obvious reasons why Christian scholars might have sought to minimize Thomas' importance.

First, if Thomas contains authentic early material, it confronts us with the possibility that the Church Fathers' original choices of books for the canon—choices made, let's recall,

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150 years and more after Jesus' life, and controversial in their time—might have been, as it were, mistaken. Second, Thomas and the hypothesized "Q" source together point to the disturbing possibility that there were early "Jesus movements" that didn't consider Jesus divine, didn't credit (or know) stories of his miracles, didn't regard his passion and death as important, and didn't believe he'd risen again. Thus would be undermined the traditional, much simpler story of apostolic succession—a story basic to the Church's claim to authority—in which Jesus designated a few of his intimates to carry on his work, and they did. Instead, we would begin to get a picture of a confused situation in which Jesus was taken up in different ways by different groups of admirers right from the outset, and in which the many writings about him, writings on which our view of him depends, began life not as objective reports but as partisan polemics designed to advance the claims of one group over another. Christian scholars who downplay Thomas should be prepared to show that they have reasons for doing so other than the fact that this new picture of things upsets traditional ecclesiastical authority.

Of course, the "new" picture isn't really so new. Paul's letters were polemics directed against competing groups and views; the sharp divisions had evidently appeared almost at once. The very first generation after Jesus' death may have been as contentious as Luther's generation, or our own. But here is where the project of the Jesus Seminar is deficient. The Seminar is still questing for the historical Jesus, as though a definitive sorting of "authentic" materials will settle the confusion once and for all. As Hays demonstrates, this quest involves assumptions that tend to make the whole effort circular. And it is fundamentally ahistorical. It's based not on a real interest in the different early views—in the ferment of ideas and movements out of which Christianity arose or in the alternative courses that Jesus-adherence might have taken. Rather, it carries on the nearly 2,000-year-old effort to suppress all that disagreement in favor of a One True View.

Of much greater interest historically would be a better account of the early ferment. This would require recovering the source documents those original disagreements produced—a textual reconstruction project that obviously cannot rely on canonical materials alone (any more than a serious history of the arguments of Luther's day can rely only on texts by Lutherans).There *are* scholars at work on this project, but like scholars in so many fields they keep neglecting to share their work with laypeople. The problem with the Jesus Seminar is that while it is a praiseworthy effort to speak to non-scholars, it's sharing the wrong work. Since Jesus left no writings, we may never have anything *but* different views of him. What we can do is at least try to *hear* those views, and to understand how they interacted at a moment in history foundational to the world we live in today.

Jeff Smith
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA

Richard B. Hays' review of the published findings of the "Jesus Seminar" is an excellent demolition of the monumental pretensions of a few ambitious and disingenuous biblical scholars. He quite clearly shows that behind the pretense of seeking scientific knowledge these scholars are in fact doing no more than the embarrassing cut-and-paste of Mr. Jefferson, our Voltairean third President, a man whose virtues liberal historians have long exaggerated while contemporary Christians understood his vices only too well. But Mr. Hays might have gone further to show that even a genuinely scientific knowledge of Jesus would be futile. A friend of mine (the distinguished medievalist Jeffrey Burton Russell) told me some thirty years ago that it would eventually be clear that the only statement Jesus certainly made was in fact one not found in any of the Gospels, canonical or not; namely, "Let us go to Capernaum." He must at some point in wandering about Galilee indeed have made such a remark. Science, after all, only tells us what doesn't matter. It tells us, for example, that 1+1+1=3. But Christians know that what really matters is that 1+1+1=1.

Norman Ravitch
Riverside, CA

Richard B. Hays replies:

I am happy to respond to these letters in order to clarify certain points that I was not able to treat sufficiently in my review of *The Five Gospels.*

Mr. Smith's challenge concerning the dating of the Gospel of Thomas touches a crucial issue indeed. My judgment that the early dating of Thomas is implausible is not merely a "rhetorical sleight of hand." The review as originally written contained several footnotes on this point that did not appear in the published version. My basic reasons for reaffirming the traditional view of Thomas as a second-century document are as follows: (1) Thomas strips away most of the specifically Jewish features of the Jesus tradition, turning Jesus into a Gnostic mystagogue; surely this is a mark of secondary—and therefore later—reinterpretation of the tradition. (2) In particular, the sayings about "the kingdom of God" (in Thomas, "the kingdom of the Father") have been removed from their native context in Jewish apocalyptic thought and converted into teachings about secret heavenly knowledge necessary for believers to reenter their heavenly home. (3) Christopher Tuckett has demonstrated that Thomas frequently shows literary dependence on the canonical gospels, including dependence upon elements that are distinctive redactional features introduced by the synoptic evangelists ("Thomas and the Synoptics," *Novum Testamentum* 30 [1988] 132-57). These factors taken together constitute a compelling argument for the relatively late date of Thomas. The scholars who defend the independence of Thomas can do so only by the artificial expedient of hypothesizing an "early version of Thomas" underlying the extant text. Since there is no evidence for the existence of such a document, the hypothesis is

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tenuous in the extreme. For more extensive discussion of these issues, see N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minnneapolis: Fortress, 1992), pp. 435-43.

As for the possibility of early Jesus movements that did not regard the passion and death of Jesus as important and did not believe he had risen again, this is a conjecture based on the fact that Thomas lacks a passion-resurrection narrative and that the hypothetical Q is alleged also to have lacked such a narrative component (though speculating about what was absent from a nonexistent, critically reconstructed "document" is iffy business, at best). The existence of a collection of Jesus' sayings, however, does not necessarily mean that those who collected such sayings were ignorant of or hostile to a narrative kerygma. Indeed, the speaker in the Gospel of Thomas is designated as "the living Jesus," which surely implies some notion of resurrection, even if not an orthodox one.

Critical skepticism about the early dating of Thomas is not necessarily based on the desire to uphold "traditional ecclesiastical authority." (One might note that the *canonical* gospels of Mark and John are both notably reticent or even skeptical about ecclesiastical authority and "apostolic succession.") Thomas was omitted from the canon not because it posed a threat to ecclesiastical authority but because it was rightly not regarded as a primary witness to the tradition of Jesus' teaching. Indeed, there was never any serious debate in the ancient church about the possible inclusion of the Gospel of Thomas in the canon—unlike, say, the Shepherd of Hermas or the Epistle of Barnabas.

Mr. Smith is right to say that the gospels "began life not as objective reports" and that their purpose is partly polemical. I would prefer to make this point by saying that the gospels are witness documents that advocate particular interpretations of the figure of Jesus against other possible interpretations. As Smith rightly notes, this is hardly a new view; Paul railed against rival Christian missionaries who preached "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4). Certainly one may applaud Smith's call for a more thorough historical account of the diversity and ferment within early Christianity, though I do not know exactly what newly recovered "source documents" he has in mind.

I do not entirely share the skepticism of Mr. Ravitch and Mr. McKenzie concerning the possibility of historical knowledge about Jesus or about the value of the distinction between the "Christ of faith" and the "Jesus of history." The diversity of the surviving accounts poses a question that may legitimately be investigated by historical methods, even though the results of such an inquiry will remain always subject to the same qualifications as any other critical reconstruction of the past. From a theological point of view, however—and here I concur with Ravitch and McKenzie—the Church's confession rests on the canonical portraits, not upon the historian's reconstruction. The plurality of those canonical portraits, however, insures continuing controversy and flexibility in the Church's construal of the figure of Jesus.

Fighting Faith?

Paul J. Griffiths, in "Why We Need Interreligious Polemics" (June/July), wants to put a stop to the trivialization of religious commitments, a trivialization he claims takes place not only in the interreligious dialogue movement but in university departments of religion and, more generally, in the American population at large.

His major concern, however, is with what passes as interreligious dialogue. He offers numerous and sweeping generalizations characterizing a monolithic interreligious dialogue movement that reaches from Geneva to Rome to Chicago. This movement is said to be guilty of: (1) promoting a "kind of well-meaning but finally destructive inanity"; (2) imposing an imperialistic discursive practice; (3) expropriating and plundering religious peoples' beliefs and practices; (4) pronouncing utterances "as useful to a serious Christian or a serious Buddhist as a pacifier is to anyone over the age of four"; (5) providing asylum for Western Christians working out their postcolonial guilt; (6) comprising a community of those with a profound misunderstanding of what religious commitment entails; (7) disallowing, "both rhetorically and actually, the thematization of the metaphysical understandings that in fact inform the practices of all participants in it." It is unfortunate that so little evidence is put forward to support these assertions. Such an omission gives polemics, that which he hopes to restore, a bad name.

More importantly, even if one were to accept Griffiths' analysis, the solution he proposes only seems to contribute further to the problem he wishes to solve. That is, to reform interreligious dialogue, we are not called to search more deeply into the depths of our respective religious traditions, but rather to adopt something like Hegel's dialectical method, i.e., hold firmly to the belief that thought progresses by means of the struggle between a thesis and an antithesis. Once you accept this premise, then intellectual authenticity is to be attributed only to those who are intellectually militant; indeed, Griffiths wants military imagery to govern the way in which interreligious dialogue is conceived. He laments the fact that interreligious dialogue practitioners do not model themselves after secular intellectual warriors such as Catharine MacKinnon and Ronald Dworkin. But to give such counsel to those who engage in interreligious dialogue is to invite them to be a particular kind of Euro-American intellectual first, and only secondarily religious. Does this not trivialize and marginalize religion? I fail to see how such an argument could be made by one who claims to want to rescue religion from its trivializers.

Another weakness in Griffiths' account derives from his seeing interreligious dialogue too narrowly as primarily a Christian activity. This is the only way one can make sense of his claim that the WCC Subunit on Dialogue represents interreligious dialogue in its "purest form." While

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it is true that interreligious dialogue emerged largely in the Christian world, it is now practiced by other religious traditions as well. Perhaps Griffiths should have entitled his essay, "Why We Christians Need to Employ Interreligious Polemics in Our Encounters with Non-Christians."

Finally, it is strikingly inconsistent that Griffiths, who certainly must know the profound sensitivity of numerous interreligious relationships in specific contexts, e.g., Sikhs and Hindus, Jews and Muslims, Indigenous Peoples and Christians, Muslims and Hindus, Hindus and Buddhists, Orthodox and Catholics, Protestants and Catholics, etc., ends his militant manifesto with an irenic caveat made specifically about dialogue between Christians and Jews, which he calls extremely delicate. Is Griffiths himself suddenly suffering from a kind of postcolonial guilt? His point is well taken, and can be applied more broadly to any number of interreligious situations, but to conclude his muscular argument with a call for Christians to be sensitive and restrained in their dialogue with Jews is, given the premises he has previously insisted upon, quite inconsistent.

Thomas G. Walsh
International Religious
Foundation
Louisville, KY

Paul Griffiths is to be commended for his call to return commitment to its rightful place in interreligious dialogue. But he drops the ball in his discussion of indefeasibility. Griffiths' assertion that "a properly constituted interreligious polemic should deploy as methods of argument and proof only tools that are recognized as authoritative and demonstrative by both sides" is both contrary to the testimony of Scripture and philosophically naive.

First, to believe, for example, that it is possible that God does not exist implies that God's revelation of himself is not as clear as Scripture indicates. To be sure, to maintain this possibility is the position of epistemological respectability since Enlightenment-era philosophers subordinated revelation to reason, but is it in keeping with Scripture? Either God has revealed himself so clearly that all are responsible for this knowledge (even those who do not know the theistic proofs), as Paul seems to be saying in Romans 1, or he has not. The same can be said of moral knowledge spoken of in Romans 2. To hold, then, that God might not exist—or, to say it another way, that the unbeliever might be correct in denying God's existence—is to declare that Scripture is false.

Also with respect to the biblical witness, to expect that the non-Christian participant in the discussion can reasonably work through the issues involved with a high degree of objectivity is to ignore scriptural assertions about the fallen condition of humankind. Are unbelievers' minds darkened as Paul said? Are they in rebellion against God, repressing the truth in unrighteousness? If the Bible is true, to hope for objective neutrality on the part of unbelievers is naive.

Griffiths' position is also philosophically deficient. Everyone has metaphysical beliefs or commitments that permit or do not permit certain ideas. To begin without basic Christian presuppositions (those things that can be known by general revelation) is to begin with other-than-Christian ones. No one is worldview-free even in his or her evaluation of any other worldview. To join the unbeliever on some kind of neutral ground is impossible; for the Christian to do so is to join the unbeliever on his turf, from which it is difficult to escape.

Richard M. Wade
Norfolk, VA

I was impressed with the piece "Why We Need Interreligious Polemics" by Paul J. Griffiths. It struck me as commonsensical since we no longer confront other religions with the fears we once held. This was not the case some thirty-five years ago with Paul Blanshard and his attack on the Catholic Church concerning separation of church and state.

In many respects Blanshard was right—even if there were unwarranted attacks on U.S. Catholicism. Remember, this was before Vatican II, and Blanshard did make valid points about various theories then prevalent in Catholic theological circles about separation of church and state as well as about religious freedom. This confrontation was good for America, good for the Catholic Church in the U.S., and, ultimately, good for the whole Catholic Church. The confrontation made the Church clarify its doctrine on religious freedom, conscience, and separation of church and state.

A much more serious question confronts the question of separation of church and state and religious freedom vis-à-vis Islam. In Catholicism, there was always a *theoretical* separation even if historically there were failures. In Islam, there has never been even a theoretical separation, and this is a huge problem (or should be) for Americans as they confront Islam. But no one is willing to face this question honestly and forthrightly. . . .

Unfortunately, it does not help to say that we must ferret out the Islamic fundamentalists from the overwhelming number of law-abiding Islamic Americans. Of course, this is true. But the problem still remains even as we do this: Is Islam as traditionally conceived compatible with liberal democracy, which is a product of Western Judeo-Christianity? That is the heart of the question which must be asked; not about controlling immigration and spotting the Islamic fundamentalists. . . .

Religious cultures can change through complex social, demographic, and technological pressures. In the meanwhile, all we have is dialogue to help the process and the evolution. . . . Catholicism evolved. Can Islam?

Peter J. Riga
Houston, TX

I want to congratulate Professor Paul Griffiths for a fine article before he gets savaged as a gang member who has somehow managed to crash the great ecumenical tea party. Instead of vigorous engagement with religious ideas, the author is likely to

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meet high, low, and broad dudgeon, and not just from members of his own communion.

In fact, Mr. Griffiths' essay puts me in mind of four of his countrymen. That stylish essayist and polemicist Christopher Derrick has referred for some twenty years to the incompatibility of genuine unity and ecumenicity, goals that can be pursued in tandem only when truth claims are abandoned or trivialized. The "unencompassability" of religion, its inability to be subsumed in other categories, was well known to Chesterton, who pointed out that paganism was the biggest thing in the world, Christianity is bigger, and everything else is comparatively small. No surprise then that Christopher Dawson should have called religion the key to history. Lastly, one can read the article as an extended gloss upon Ronald Knox's quip that the comparative study of religions is a good way to become comparatively religious: that is, to pretend to float outside or above metaphysical commitment, a disinterested browser through the belief-boutique with no awkward questions to be asked about the merchandise.

In short, decaf and deconstruction are welcome at the tea party; truth and, one suspects, Mr. Griffiths must be shown the door. The inadequacies of interreligious dialogue in the country where it is most popular prove what most have long recognized: Americans brew notoriously weak tea.

P. M. Aliazzi
Hunting Valley, OH

Together with Whom?

The declaration on "Evangelicals & Catholics Together" (May) states that "we thank God for the discovery of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." But to be a brother or sister in Christ requires that each individual be first "in Christ." Those in union with Christ are brothers and sisters by virtue of their union with Jesus. But implicit in the Evangelicals and Catholics declaration of brotherhood is the message that there are two ways of being incorporated into union with Christ, i.e., two methods of salvation. As a Bible-believing Christian, I am certainly not about to recognize as brothers and sisters people who tell me that to be saved one must be baptized, believe in Jesus, and perform good works (Catholics and Mormons).

Next I suppose I will hear about "Evangelicals & Catholics & Mormons Together" and that God has three ways of being saved. I certainly don't trust anyone who subscribes to this kind of pseudo-brotherhood.

Charles Gillespie
Phoenix, AZ

Thank you for the encouraging, thoughtful, and comprehensive declaration "Evangelicals & Catholics Together." It helps to bring out with more clarity and greater charity the nature of the orthodox realignment of North American churches.

While appreciating the American context of this statement, there is a tendency to over-identify the Christian faith with the American experiment in democracy. No doubt, it is crucial to bring out the Christian principles and assumptions in the founding constitutional documents of America and to secure the place of the Christian religion in the public discourse of the nation. But classical modernity gave birth to constitutional government in a variety of forms, all of which are more-or-less explicitly Christian in their origins. The American republic is, undoubtedly, one of those forms, but certainly not the only one. And it may be asked how adequately Trinitarian it is in its constitutional structures.

Along the same lines, the statement marks too great an identification between the principles of Christian freedom and a free market economy. This overlooks the strong and necessary criticism of contemporary capitalism in *Veritatis Splendor*, for example, as well as the historic fact that Christianity embraces a variety of economic forms and cannot be constrained to any one in particular. This does not preclude the relative evaluation of different economic systems, but does one really want to claim that capitalism is more inherently Christian than, say, mercantilism before and the socialist economics now of many Western democracies? The danger in the equation is to release economics to the activity of the will without regard to the structures of creation and the principles of political and religious life. . . .

(The Rev.) David Curry
Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia
Canada

I commend all those who participated in and contributed to the drafting of the historic statement "Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." For the first time since I first came to the United States in 1989, I found a real effort to prevent the spread of conflict between Evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Being a Catholic native from Latin America, it was extremely difficult while pursuing my bachelors degree at an American Protestant college to interact with certain students and, at times, unpleasant to visit churches from other denominations. The verbal attacks on the Catholic Church during preaching by some of the non-Catholic churches I visited were insulting. This was an experience that I had never witnessed in my home country of Peru, even though the conflicts and divisions between the churches also exist in Latin America as well as in the rest of the world. . . .

Ricardo E. Romero
Washington, D.C.

The Abortion Debate (Cont.)

What insufferable PC gobbledygook from Professors Wilson and Arkes, and what posturing pedants they are ("Abortion Facts and Feelings II: An Exchange," May). It is especially sad that Professor Arkes believes "that life begins at conception, that there is no ground of principle on which the embryo or fetus could be regarded as anything less than human at any stage of its existence," and yet, given such pronouncement, he would not necessarily have the law try to protect the embryo at every moment or seek

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"absolute prohibition" on abortion. May I ask under what circumstances he *would* necessarily have the law absolutely prohibit abortion?

How true it is that it is given to the simple of heart to accept on faith the profundities of life. The moral issue of abortion is a very simple and clear-cut one: life is a gift from the Creator of all, and as such is sacred. But even allowing for the fact that all people are not accepting of the existence of God, based purely on human principles and basic rights we cannot arbitrarily destroy human life because, in so doing, we destroy ourselves and our society. . . .

Mary J. Feerick
San Francisco, CA

The Arkes/Wilson dialogue published in First Things has elevated the abortion debate from impassioned rhetoric to impassioned thinking; and, as Mr. Arkes intimates in his closing paragraph, if thought can be made to prevail, his and Mr. Wilson's common cause will some day prevail. Mr. Wilson proposes that we address the issue by appealing to moral sentiments; Mr. Arkes counters with an argument that emphasizes moral principles. In the process they have clarified those issues—which is a step in the right direction. A great many Americans who have doubts about abortion have hesitated to conclude that it is wrong largely because the pro-abortion side has succeeded in confusing those issues. The Arkes/Wilson dialogue should help them resolve those confusions.

In the best of all worlds, moral sentiments would follow from moral principles. If the Ten Commandments were the moral principles we absorbed in childhood, our moral imaginations, sentiments, and sympathies would flow from that. In the case of abortion, my principle is: I would not have wanted my own life aborted and thus cannot want it for others. Not surprisingly, then, when contemplating abortion, my sentiment is directed toward the blind, speechless creature on the human slag pile. True, as Mr. Wilson has noted, the more developed the infant is, the more sympathy I will likely feel for it. In its embryonic stage, I am more likely to rely upon my moral principle to tell me that killing it is wrong. There is, however, another factor in moral judgment: moral imagination. A pregnant woman is capable of envisioning an embryo's potential as an infant in the cradle and later as a growing child. Showing her a picture of her child's likely appearance at the point she is contemplating aborting it postulates that she is influenced solely by the infant's current appearance—that she is unable to imagine the child's potential.

If a woman has doubts about aborting, an appeal to sentiment may change her mind. If she actually aborts without medical reason to do so, the following conditions probably exist: (a) she does not want the child or has been persuaded by others not to want it; (b) the moral principle that would prevent her from doing away with her infant has been attenuated; (c) the state encourages abortion (*Roe*) or has declared the moral principle of abortion to be valid (again, *Roe*). If conditions (a), (b), and (c) exist, it is highly unlikely that pictures will save an infant's life.

Though I do not agree with Mr. Wilson's specific proposal, I don't entirely fault his approach. He is simply recognizing the fact that in our time moral judgment is much more apt to be based upon sentiment than principle. My own (admittedly limited) experience bears him out. When I discuss abortion with pro-abortion friends and relations, their sympathies are not with the infant, but rather with the woman who wants to be rid of a burden—especially if she lives in wretched circumstances. They do not see abortion as a taking of life. It is a conscious act, yes, and there is a death; but somehow there is no killing. Life, they argue, has not yet begun. How there can be a death when life has not begun is a question with which they simply do not deal. A firmly rooted moral principle would force them to face this question. When they justify abortion, it is always in legal or political terms: personal freedom or the achievement of social goals such as population control, family planning, safe abortions, etc. None of these are moral principles. Ultimately, abortion is a matter of personal convenience; and, in the absence of principle which says that an act is wrong, one does that which suits one's convenience.

At present the abortion movement seems unstoppable. But there are weaknesses in its armor. For one thing, its moral and philosophic underpinning is largely negative (hence the need for the "pro-choice" euphemism). Also, abortion's legal standing is doubtful: it was implemented by judicial fiat. But if there is one thing modern history has taught us, it is that a negative moral passion, especially when it is state policy, will overwhelm all opposition, then fail abysmally. Franz Kafka notwithstanding, no state (or court) can make us into nonmoral creatures. We may become wicked, but we are moral beings: we seek to justify our acts. Where those acts are not supported by a positive moral principle, negative feelings intrude. We begin to feel contempt for victims—in this case, the aborted fetuses. The child with a disability begins to seem like something unnatural. We reject compromise: the adoption alternative becomes repugnant. Our view of life becomes negative. . . . How long will it last? How far will it go? Those questions are hard to answer—but it is likely to last until people in a materially successful pluralistic society find a way to reach a moral consensus. The Arkes-Wilson debate will do much to help us achieve that end.

Francis Quinlan
Staten Island, NY

Along with Hadley Arkes, I too should like to express my respect and admiration for James Wilson. But Arkes is right to question the adequacy of the theory of moral sentiments that Wilson espouses. Arkes' objections to that theory are likewise inadequate, however, for they are couched in rhetorical discourse, which, although of course not bad in itself, has the effect of obscuring the point. What is needed is a concise and straightforward account of the precise way in which "theories of moral sentiments" can be true, and the pre-

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cise way in which they fall short of the truth.

Readers should know first of all that theories of moral sentiments date back to David Hume and Adam Smith. Hume, in particular, was obliged to adopt such a theory because, having begun from false hypotheses concerning the human soul, he found himself entirely incapable of grasping the nature of knowledge. So entire was his confusion—a confusion which is now our intellectual heritage—that he could not in fact distinguish what we know from what we do; and this, in turn, led him to identify knowledge with mores. Ethics, then, could no longer be founded on anything objectively understood, for indeed there was no objective knowledge as far as Hume could discern.

Sounder philosophical traditions have understood that the science of ethics is founded on the nature of man. And although the nature of man is comprised, as it were, of many elements, sounder traditions have also understood that reason is its most perfect and decisive characteristic. Accordingly, the moral perfection of character called virtue must take place through reason. This is not merely because we need reason to reflect upon our own nature, but also because reason is our nature. For Hume, by contrast, there is strictly speaking no objective foundation for morality; but if there were one it could be none other than sentiment, which is to say a sensible inclination or disposition as opposed to a rational one. There would therefore be no way to distinguish the ethics of man from the "ethics" of a brute, no matter how noble.

What is moral sentiment? Insofar as the words themselves pertain to a flawed theory of man, one should perhaps say that they represent nothing real at all. Yet one need not take them merely as the theory (or theories) would take them. Common experience demonstrates that there is in human nature something that might go by the name of moral sentiment, and indeed it is part of Wilson's merit to have demonstrated the considerable extent of such sentiment. And part of the importance of recognizing such moral sentiment stems from the fact that, whereas reason must be tutored and perfected through discourse and self-reflection, this is not true of moral sentiment. Such sentiment is natural in a more elementary sense of the word, which is to say that it is ours before we choose it or reason about it. Through it therefore we may very well begin to discover the fact of our having a moral nature; but the mistake would be to think that such sentiment offers the possibility for an adequate account of that nature.

One final observation. If there is any place where these distinctions are especially pertinent and manifest, it would seem to be abortion. Abortionists become indignant when their opponents appeal to natural emotion (by displaying pictures of aborted fetuses, for example), for even they recognize instinctively, as it were, that the ultimate issue must be about the human soul, about whether there is such a thing or not, and about what it is. They know, moreover, in some confused way, that emotion cannot be what most precisely characterizes that soul, nor can it be the proper means by which we grasp the existence of the soul. Yet indeed it cannot be wrong to wonder, and demand that others wonder, about the natural sentiments aroused by the sight of a dead mangled fetus. Rightly addressed, such wonder should lead one far beyond mere sentiment.

Sean Collins
St. John's College
Santa Fe, NM

A Jewish Theocracy?

With regard to "Shul, State, and the Price of Being Different" in The Public Square by Richard John Neuhaus (June/July) on the Kiryas Joel case, there is, of course, much more to be said. It is correct that Catholic and Protestant groups submitted *amicus* briefs in strong support of Kiryas Joel. But what was not noted is that there were Christian and Jewish groups on *both* sides of this extraordinary case.

Interestingly, one of the Jewish groups that filed a brief in opposition to creation of the Kiryas Joel school district consisted of over five hundred Satmar Hasidic residents of Kiryas Joel. "Thereby hangs a tale." The leader of the dissidents, one Joseph Waldman, had the temerity to run for the Kiryas Joel Village School Board without the approval of Grand Rabbi Moses Teitelbaum. Waldman is a fifth-generation Satmar member. Nonetheless, for his rashness, he was expelled from the synagogue, his six children were expelled from the main yeshiva, his tires were slashed, the windows of his house were broken, and hundreds of Satmars, including the Grand Rabbi, demonstrated in front of his home shouting: "Death to Waldman." (Waldman now has a permit to carry a pistol for self-protection.)

The fact is that the Kiryas Joel enclave is a theocracy, ruled with an iron hand by the Grand Rabbi, somewhat reminiscent of the Puritan theocracy in Massachusetts Bay Colony in the seventeenth century. His dictates are law on all matter of importance, and dissent is not taken lightly.

If the constitutional principle of separation of church and state is to have any meaning at all, it should mean at least this: a state should not confer its governmental powers on a religious entity. Yet, that is precisely what the State of New York did in creating a special public school district for the learning-disabled children of Kiryas Joel.

Obviously there is no constitutional problem in a public school district that happens to be populated overwhelmingly by Jews—or Catholics, or Baptists, or citizens of any other faith. But that is not Kiryas Joel. Rather, this religious enclave, by design, is for Satmar Hasidim only. No one is free to simply move in. Others are not welcome. Permission to build or rent must be granted by the Grand Rabbi, and anyone who wants to build within its borders must pay a minimum tithe of $10,000 to Congregation Yetev Lev. Two residents who were foolhardy enough to rent without rabbinic permission were beaten and stoned. This is an American municipality in control of a public

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school district?

The learning-disabled children of Kiryas Joel are fully entitled by law to a secular education at public expense. Yet these children culturally are so different from other handicapped children that they are apt to be miserable in a regular public school setting. But there is an alternative. Their education can be effectively provided by the local public school district at a neutral location—without doing violence to constitutional principle.

Samuel Rabinove
American Jewish Committee
New York, NY

Neuhaus and Freud

Richard John Neuhaus' jabs at psychiatry in "Psychiatry's Shrinking Market" (Public Square, May) regrettably show the same cynical bias of which historically psychiatry has been guilty toward religion. It is no more attractive from a Neuhaus or a Freud. Yes, the American Psychiatric Association is flawed (as are churches) but the desert between religious and mental health issues needs to be crossed for the sake of patients. As medical director of a psychiatric program at a Catholic hospital, I can unfortunately attest that spiritually aspiring people become depressed, psychotic, experience panic attacks, and carry other emotional burdens just like agnostics and atheists. The mentally ill are the lepers of today. They are compelled to hide their illness not only from friends and relatives but also from their church. They are "unclean." If they seek psychiatric attention they are at times belittled, told they are weak or have "too little faith." A patient can talk more openly about AIDS than about depression.

Help from Richard John Neuhaus is welcome and needed. Comments about "market shares" and derisive allusions about psychiatrists are uncharitable and do our patients no good.

F. Gregory Noveske, M.D.
Westlake, OH

Religion and Communitarianism

In First Things (Public Square, February) the Editor-in-Chief quotes Joshua Abramowitz's review of my book *The Spirit of Community*: "Etzioni's plans for a 'moral revival' pay almost no attention to religion." He adds: "When religion does come up, it is often tied to intolerant excess—religious faith and authoritarian thuggery go hand in hand." (Others have raised similar criticisms, including Michael Joyce in a *Wall Street Journal* book review and Bryce Christensen in *The Family in America*.)

The criticism is basically fair. Neither The Communitarian Network's platform, which has been endorsed by some of America's most eminent religious thinkers as well as secular ones, nor my book attend to the important role that religion and its institutions have and should have in a moral, social, and political reconstruction of society. A defensible response is that we are but four years young. While communitarian ideas have been around since the ancient Greeks, we came together only in 1991 as an organized group, capable of forming a platform, position papers, a quarterly, etc., and there are other vital issues—from the economy to national security—that we have yet to address.

Truth to be told, however, our reluctance runs deeper. The religious voices we hear most, or at least the loudest, are angry and bashing. Alien to us in temperament, these voices have made many recoil. Communitarians already support strong family values, character education in schools, and the restoration of moral values and socially responsible behavior. If we are to bridge the remaining differences among our positions and those of religious groups, we need more dialogue and fewer condemnations.

A particular example of communitarian-bashing is the berating of our quarterly, *The Responsive Community*, in First Things (Public Square, May) on the basis of one unfortunate sentence that belittled the impact of religion on morality today. First Things fails to note that our journal does allow writers of various viewpoints to express their ideas and that the offending sentence is followed by a lengthy and well-documented article that speaks page upon page about the prominent role of religion in American life.

Communitarians' frequent—but far from exclusive—reliance on social science findings rather than on scriptural quotations is another source of discomfort for religiously minded critics. For instance, our concern about the decline of two-parent families draws heavily on empirical research that illuminates the ill effects caused by family dismemberment. I see no reason why this inclination would trouble religious authorities. While they may prefer that communitarians go about their mission drawing on the same texts used in religious teachings, one would expect spokesmen of religious groups to recognize that they share many basic values with communitarians, even if the latter support these values with a variety of arguments, including social scientific and secular ones.

Furthermore, among the active communitarians are people of great faith (Mary Ann Glendon and Jean Bethke Elshtain, for example). They have great influence on our thinking even if they do not always carry us all the way to places they believe we ought to go. We welcome others to join the conversation not merely from across the fence but from inside the communitarian home.

Amitai Etzioni
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

More Humility, Please

Reading First Things, I am inspired to reflect on the differences between spirituality and ideology. Both can employ a religious vocabulary and yet they play entirely different roles in people's lives. Spirituality involves a commitment to opening one's heart, to growing in faith, hope, and love. Ideology is about the comfort of having answers, of creating categories and distinctions, of defining insiders and outsiders.

All of us who aspire to sincerely

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follow Christ, Buddha, Moses, or Muhammad must work with this distinction in mind. Is our dedication to the teachings making our capacity for compassion increase? Or is it making our world smaller? For none of us can completely avoid the temptation to be judgmental.

Richard John Neuhaus is clearly proud of his long list of enemies: the "homosexual movement," feminism, New Age and liberal religionists, the diverse advocates of humanism and modernity. But is his scorn the most effective way of witnessing to the Good News that the Son of God, born as a man, was crucified and resurrected for the sins of all humanity?

And in the June/July issue Paul Griffiths and John Mullen were eager to restore Christian apologetics. But apologetics is a pointless attempt to substitute knowledge for faith. The failure of the apologetical enterprise is apparent in Griffiths' casual dismissal of the profound thought of Nagarjuna and Mullen's inability to truly engage the challenges that Existentialism makes against contemporary Christianity. Confidence in our salvation through the cross of Christ Jesus must lie beyond all such defensiveness.

Faith frequently requires of us the poverty and humility of not knowing the answers, of being uncertain, of allowing experience to teach us about the limitlessness of God's love. This spirit is seldom found in First Things.

May peace be with you.

Mark Copithorne
New York, NY

. . . The general tone of First Things tends to be outrage that anyone would have the audacity to disagree with a position taken by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, supplemented by snide sarcasm and ad hominem arguments directed towards those who have such temerity.

There are many problems faced by our society that will depend on the good will and combined efforts of religious individuals of somewhat differing opinions on many issues. To denigrate those who differ in some respects from your own positions without acknowledging their sincerity or even the possibility (incredible to you, I am sure) that they could occasionally be correct hurts all of our efforts.

E. Thomas Dowd
Akron, OH

Prayer in Schools

This letter regards Richard John Neuhaus' comments on the effort of religious leaders to alert school superintendents and teachers to our belief that organized prayer does not belong in the public schools (Public Square, June/July). The letter to which Neuhaus refers was signed by over six hundred clergy members across denominational lines in order to inform the American public of the many religious leaders who believe the constitutional principle of church-state separation benefits religion. In fact, many religious leaders agree with Rev. Robert Meneilly's statement, "Any religion that needs government to support and subsidize it doesn't deserve to survive. It is not the state's business to carry out the church's ministries!"

History is replete with examples of the harmful results that occur when public schools become the repository of religion. One example will suffice to illustrate the danger in making our public schools the arbiter of faith. In 1843 Bishop Francis Kenrick of Philadelphia petitioned the school board to allow Catholic students to use the Catholic version of the Bible when Bible reading was required. Riots broke out throughout Philadelphia. Catholic churches were attacked, a convent was destroyed, and many houses were burned to ashes. Reports of this incident in New York caused Bishop Hughes to protect Catholic churches by surrounding them with armed men. Twenty-four people were killed and it took federal troops to quell the riot. How much more important is it today, when America is home not only to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, but also to Muslims, Hindus, Native Americans, and Buddhists, to keep the public schools neutral of all religious instruction.

Moreover, Neuhaus' claim that the moral decay of our society stems from the "secularization of the classroom" is both simplistic and false. It belies the complexity that underlies the social ills of our society. The reintroduction of prayer into school rooms is a cursory measure that does not address the complicated problems facing our public schools. We at the American Jewish Committee advocate the teaching of common core values which are shared by all religions such as courtesy, honesty, compassion, respect for others. This approach is illustrated in our Hands Across the Campus curriculum, which is currently being used in public schools in Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Furthermore, it is disingenuous for Neuhaus to claim that the ACLU and other separationist organizations are the only ones "firing" in this "battleground over religion." In fact, court cases are pending in Florida, Idaho, Iowa, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia regarding the constitutionality of "student-led" prayers. The American Center for Law and Justice certainly aimed and shot when they distributed a letter to superintendents across America misapplying the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Jones v. Clear Creek Independent School District* to the entire country when it is only legally binding on public schools in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The discussion on culture, morality, and religion in our society can best be furthered by recognizing the diversity of religions within America, advocating that those seeking spiritual direction turn to religious institutions for guidance, and maintaining the distinction between state interests and religious agendas for all concerned. In this way, the public schools will be able to focus their efforts on educating our children for the next century rather than becoming the arbiter of varying religious claims.

Rabbi Lori Forman
American Jewish Committee
New York, NY

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Richard John Neuhaus replies:
We never doubted that the AJC advocates "courtesy, honesty, compassion, and respect for others." In the interest of honesty, I note that it is false to say that I "claim that the moral decay of our society stems from the 'secularization of the classroom.' " I wrote that "it is just silly to pretend that [the] elimination [of school prayer] in the 1960s was not a major step toward the secularization of the classroom." I doubt if even the AJC disagrees with that, although of course it prefers to call secularization "neutrality." As for who is doing the firing on student-led prayers, is anyone protesting other than hard-line separationists? And why is "student-led" in quotes? Because, wouldn't you know it, some teachers encourage students to pray. Horrors.

Unclear Criteria

I was quite surprised to see that Daniel Callahan, in his reply to commentators in your symposium on the sanctity of life (April), attributed to me a view opposed to the one for which I argued. I had described a case in which Callahan's criteria would not help a health care provider know when to stop treating a patient. In this case, the patient had specified that if his transplanted kidney were rejected, he did not want further treatment. Callahan's criterion that the physician should avoid causing a worse death fails to guide the provider for two reasons. First, the physician would not think in terms of what kind of death to provide, but of the hopes for saving the patient's life. (Eric Cassell's contribution to the symposium underscored the same point.) Second, no single "quality of death" standard will fit everyone. Supporting the decision of the patient in the example requires appreciation of how he and his tradition experiences the sacred. Callahan misrepresented my position as arguing that the patient's high-tech, desolate, and profane death was "*justified*" by the lack of certainty that the patient would die. I can think of no writer in medical ethics who would argue that providing a worse death is *justified* by ignorance of the ultimate outcome, although some might argue that it is *excused*. If the action were justified it would be the right thing to do. Clearly it was not. I was discussing the adequacy of Callahan's proffered principles and distinctions, however, not the physician's actions.

Many of the essays to the symposium made useful contributions and corrections, including William F. May's point that (contrary to the way in which both Callahan and I discussed PVS) patients in a PVS need not be dying. Callahan, however, was intent on finding someone to whom to attribute the position of technological enthusiasm. He compares my point that we are morally responsible for our use of medical technology to the slogan "Guns do not kill people, people kill people." Can he really mean that respirators and intensive care technology are like "Saturday night specials" and assault weapons, or that we ought to have a buy-back program for intensive care equipment?

Elsewhere, I have discussed some differences between types of medical technologies and the threats and promises they pose to our moral life. The general point I want to make here is that unless we recognize the differences in the moral challenges posed by varying types of technology, we stand little chance of rising to those challenges.

If medical ethics is to offer more than the Luddite stance of smashing the machines, then we need both a better understanding of medical technology and a more constructive approach in medical ethics itself. If we are to prevent betrayal, invasion, or abandonment of the dying, then one matter that deserves much more attention is the experience of the sacred in people's lives.

Caroline Whitbeck
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology
Cambridge, MA

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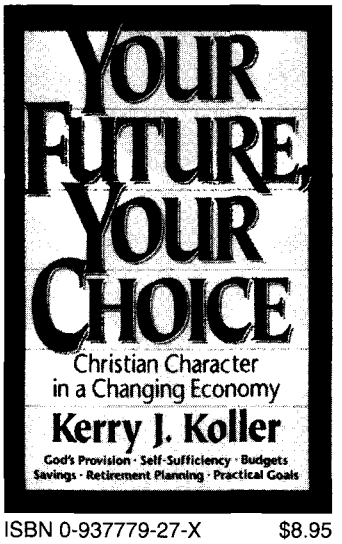
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THIS TIME

Life at the Intellectual Barricades

James Nuechterlein

"But why do you have to be so polemical?"

It's a not unfamiliar complaint (see, for example, this month's correspondence), and one that I—and the other editors of FIRST THINGS—take seriously, any possible appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. We live, by choice and vocation, at the intellectual barricades, and we are fully aware of the dangers and temptations attendant there.

The greatest danger, it seems to me, is ideological captivity, hardening of the intellectual categories. Not that ideology can or should be avoided. Those who engage in regular and systematic reflection on political/cultural issues will, unless they are utterly mindless, come to some set of interrelated conclusions—however tentatively held—as to how the world does and should work. They will, that is, form what most of us would call an ideology. As George Will puts it, "Political ideas cluster and people cluster politically." Those regularly involved with ideas who regard themselves as without ideology, without some general pattern(s) of analysis out of which they make sense of experience, need either to think more deeply or—more likely—to stop fooling themselves. (Most of those who consider themselves above ideology are, in my experience, liberals who for one reason or another are reluctant to announce that fact to themselves.)

The trick, of course, is to keep ideology one's servant, not one's master. Our necessary frameworks of understanding must be kept flexible and self-critical, open to experience, uncertainty, and surprise. Ideology interprets experience—life does not present itself to us simply as one damn thing after another—but ideology must always be subject to revision on the basis of experience.

In any case, it is from ideology that polemics flow. FIRST THINGS is a journal of opinion, and its editors are necessarily engaged in the perennial conflicts of ideas that mark a democratic society's deliberations as to how we shall order our life together. That is not everyone's vocation, and it is not the highest vocation, but it is inescapably ours. It would be disingenuous of us to pretend to an attitude of disinterestedness and neutrality in the culture wars that rage about us. (I take it as self-evident that no one who pays attention to these matters would deny that such a conflict is in fact under way.) And it's hard to imagine that a journal of opinion that had no opinions would be of use or interest to anyone. Blandness in the pursuit of truth is no virtue.

Ideally, of course, conflicts of ideas should be carried on with civility and decorum, with assumptions between the combatants of mutual respect and good faith. Moreover, those engaged in such conflicts do well to cultivate habits of irony and intellectual humility. I have always thought that Oliver Cromwell's plea to certain of his opponents—"I beseech thee in the bowels of Christ, consider that ye may be wrong"—ought to be directed as much towards oneself as toward one's opponents. The polemical instinct natural to politically engaged intellectuals needs to be tempered by regular reminders of provisionality and fallibility. Such cautions in fact come naturally to those of us who came of intellectual age in the middle-to-late 1950s—that brief, golden era of consensus, with its prevailing moods of irony, ambiguity, and paradox. Those formed in that age will forever recall it as an idyll of civility and sobriety—however exceptional, however irrecoverable—against which the furies of our contemporary Kulturkampf cannot stand comparison.

But, however regretfully, it is indeed a culture war in which my colleagues and I find ourselves engaged, and it is worth emphasizing that this is a conflict not of our making. In his book *The Neoconservatives* (1979), Peter Steinfels described those on our side of the barricades as "counterintellectuals," people who move in the intellectual world but who do not share that world's dominant sense of alienation and estrangement from the ideas, values, and institutions of the middle-American majority. We are the adversaries of the adversary order, counterintellectuals against the counterculture. (Steinfels placed us in a tradition extending from Burke to de Tocqueville to Weber to such modern exemplars as Raymond Aron and George Orwell. Not bad company, that.) Since the insurgency of the New Left and the New Politics in the 1960s, the values of the adversary culture have, in various guises, prevailed among the nation's intellectual elites, and ours is a counterrevolution against that *gauchiste* hegemony.

This is no rarefied battle of the books, no mere esoteric disagreement among obscure scribblers. Ideas, as they say, have consequences, and it is our entirely sober judgment that in this war of ideas the

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fate of the American experiment in ordered liberty is itself at stake. We make no claim concerning the motives of our radical adversaries, but we do not hesitate to insist that their ideas range from the merely silly to the deeply pernicious. We take no particular pleasure in engaging the militant feminists and homosexual activists, the Nietzschean deconstructionists and relativists, the enemies of traditional morality and religious faith; indeed, the ongoing conflict with our various utopians and Gnostics is dirty business from which no one emerges with entirely clean hands or uncoarsened sensibilities. But we persist in the struggle because we think it is our simple duty to do so, and we frankly do not take it well that so many of our fellow intellectuals—who if they cannot join us in the struggle could at least offer moral support—prefer instead to strike ostentatiously Olympian poses above the fray and to chide us for our combative ways.

But we remind ourselves that self-pity is to be avoided, and we soldier on, armed (we hope) against self-righteousness by the knowledge that the God of history sits in judgment over all the combatants in the wars of the earthly city, siding unambiguously with none, offering his grace to all. Precisely because we know, with the writer to the Hebrews, that we have here no abiding city, we are from time to time tempted to retire from the fray, to set our minds on higher and better things. But the evils of this world, so far as it is given us to discern them, are to be resisted, not merely endured. And there is, we pray, a measure of honor and dignity even in our grim vocation. So restraining our naturally irenic impulses, we return to the struggle with all the courage, wisdom, and ingenuity we can muster. It is, to repeat, a matter of duty.

And that is why—at least on occasion—we have to be so polemical. FT

The Child Hildegard at Her Needle

— Disibodenberg, 1108

Jutta says I am not to notice
the smell of leeks on the abbot
who comes to hear our sins
but pray instead for absolution
lest the pounding of my head return
and I am cast out of heaven.
We have both giggled over our needle
for when our servant Angelica
grins, what a black smile!
We might be lost on a strange hill
with few white posts as markers.
Yesterday she spilled my soup.
What faults that I should heed her gums
without gratitude for her graces!
Yet she snores in her cell
and rises for Matins with straw
still in her hair and her breath
rattling like dry grape leaves.

In my pink cushion
I've stitched Christ's heart,
as Jutta showed me,
so I might cross-stitch there
signs of my sins, each
piercing anew His gentle soul.
They'll make a crown of thorns
about Him, and sorrow for me.
Help Angelica, Lord,
and I pray myself to be forgiven.

Stella Nesanovich

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Opinion

Abortion Before *Roe*

Russell Hittinger

Less than two years after the citizens of Washington voted by referendum to uphold the state's prohibition of physician-assisted suicide, a federal judge invalidated the statute as unconstitutional. In *Roe v. Washington*, decided on May 3, 1994, Judge Barbara Rothstein cited the Supreme Court's definition of "liberty" in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992): "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

Judge Rothstein reasoned that if the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment recognizes such "liberty" in the matter of abortion, liberty must also include the right of a mentally competent, terminally ill adult to commit suicide. From this conclusion, it would seem to follow that a physician does nothing wrongful in assisting a perfectly legal act.

It was perhaps inevitable that the definition of "liberty" in *Casey* would not remain an inert piece of legal dictum but would begin to move like a juggernaut through various sectors of the law. We certainly have not seen the last application of this dictum, for which we probably have Justice Anthony Kennedy to thank.

Yet what is especially troublesome about Judge Rothstein's decision is that it followed just a few months after the citizens of Washington had declared otherwise. Washington is one of the least-churched states in the country, so this was not a matter of the religious right clamoring for the enforcement of an outmoded statute. Nor was it a question of a court's intervening in the political process in order to facilitate the legislative will of the majority. Rather, Judge Rothstein clearly and baldly ruled that the majority of the citizens of Washington have no constitutional right to be self-governing in this matter. In short, they have no political competence over the private use of lethal force against innocent members of their community—at least not when a person is ill and gives his consent to be killed. How it is that, lacking such power, they remain a political community in any ordinary sense of the term is a question that was neither raised nor answered in the case.

In Federalist 45, James Madison assured critics of the Constitution that "the power reserved for the several states will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the state." By no stretch of the historical imagination can we believe that the Constitution would have been ratified had the people known that they would lack the legal and political competence, as Madison said, "in the ordinary affairs," to keep the invalid from being killed by physicians. *Roe v. Washington* raises once again the problem of federal courts abrogating democratic self-governance guaranteed by the Constitution.

Justice Harry Blackmun, of course, will admit no embarrassment over the fact that in *Roe v. Wade* the Court overturned the laws of the states on an issue of homicide. "Roe against Wade," he opines, "was not such a revolutionary opinion at the time." In other words, the Court only ratified social evolution on the question. Similarly, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said that *Roe* was unnecessary because society of its own accord was moving toward the same result. Whether the Court acted rightly or clumsily, conventional wisdom has it that no damage was done to the common good because the Court was only acting slightly ahead of the legislative curve.

The real history, however, does not support this view. Rather, legal abortion came into existence much the same way as physician-assisted euthanasia is coming into existence today: via the federal judiciary in direct opposition to the will of the citizens in the states.

One of the chief virtues of David Garrow's book *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (Macmillan) is that he uncovers the legislative history of the debate over "reproductive rights." Garrow himself is clearly a partisan of the movement for constitutionalizing "reproductive rights." But he does manage to relate the facts. And these facts are interesting indeed. Over the course of six decades, whenever the new principle of liberty elucidated in the *Casey* decision has been placed before the people for a vote, the people have rejected it. The principle has migrated from issue to issue; but it is always the same principle, and it always meets with the same result.

Prior to *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), when the Supreme Court "invented" (Garrow's word) the right of privacy, the opponents of state laws prohibiting or restricting contraceptive devices had failed to win a single significant legislative victory. The Connecticut and Massachusetts statutes on the subject, adopted in the late 1870s, were supported by the New England Society for the Suppression of Vice, an organization that counted among its members the presidents of Amherst, Brown, Dartmouth, and Yale.

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This legislation followed in the wake of the so-called Comstock anti-contraceptive and anti-obscenity statutes of 1873, which dealt with the interstate shipment or importation of goods, articles, or literature concerning sexuality or reproduction.

Efforts to modify the state statutes, usually in the form of an exception for doctors prescribing contraceptives for therapeutic purposes, were voted down in Connecticut in 1932 and once again in 1933. A 1931 bid by Margaret Sanger to gain Congressional approval for a doctor's amendment to the federal laws was rejected overwhelmingly in the U.S. House and Senate. John W. McCormack, future Speaker of the House, commented: "I can conceive of no more dangerous piece of legislation to the future of America."

In 1938, a Massachusetts court unanimously upheld its state laws, as did the Connecticut Supreme Court in 1940 (a court, incidentally, consisting of four Congregationalists and one Baptist). Just six years before *Griswold,* in 1959, the Connecticut Court upheld the laws once again. In 1942 and in 1948 Massachusetts voters rejected by large percentages referenda that would have slightly liberalized the anti-contraceptive statutes. Connecticut voters rejected liberalization in 1953 and 1957. Every time that liberalization, much less repeal, came before the people in the form of referenda or legislative bills, the votes were not even close.

Garrow makes it clear that the "reproductive rights" movement won its victories in the federal courts, not in the legislatures. Interestingly, in the first Supreme Court case dealing with contraception, *Poe v. Ullman* (1961), Justice Felix Frankfurter was so astonished by the conservative legislative history that he asked, at oral argument, whether some "outside authoritarian power" had coerced the Connecticut legislature. Even after the Court struck down the Connecticut statute in 1965, other states adamantly retained various kinds of anti-contraceptive statutes. The Supreme Court ripped these out of the states, one by one, until they finally managed to invalidate New York's law against the sale of contraceptives to minors in 1977. Even in the middle of the sexual revolution, states did not willingly relinquish their authority to exercise moral police powers in this matter.

Those working to repeal state abortion laws did not fare much better. In 1963, Alan Guttmacher admitted that any change in the abortion laws that suggested the non-humanity of the fetus would "be voted down by the body politic." The facts bear him out. In 1967, "reform" measures, usually concerning therapeutic exceptions, were turned aside in Arizona, Georgia, New York, Indiana, North Dakota, New Mexico, Nebraska, and New Jersey. In 1969, such bills failed to emerge from committee in Iowa and Minnesota, and were defeated outright in Nevada and Illinois. In 1970, exceptions based on therapeutic reasons were defeated in Vermont and Massachusetts.

In 1971, on the eve of *Roe v. Wade,* repeal bills were voted down in Montana, New Mexico, Iowa, Minnesota, Maryland, Colorado, Massachusetts, Georgia, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Ohio, and North Dakota. In 1972, even as *Roe* was under consideration by the Supreme Court, the Massachusetts House by a landslide vote of 178 to 46 passed a measure that would have bestowed the full legal rights of children on fetuses from the moment of conception. At the same time, the supreme courts of South Dakota and Missouri upheld their states' anti-abortion laws. It was surely telling that during the very month that Justice Blackmun finished the draft of his *Roe* opinion, 61 percent of the voters in Michigan and 77 percent in North Dakota by referenda voted down repeal.

To be sure, reformers and repealers won a few legislative victories prior to *Roe.* In 1967, Colorado liberalized its law. But it placed restrictions on abortion that were much more severe than anything permitted by post-*Roe* federal courts. Reform legislation also passed in North Carolina (1968), but with the rejection of mental health exceptions. California (1967), Georgia (1968), and South Carolina (1970) changed, but did not repeal, their abortion laws. The two most significant legislative victories for the repealers took place in 1970 in New York and Hawaii. These victories, however, were narrow and contentious, and did not approximate the percentages of pro-life victories in other states at the same time. At the time of *Roe,* there was evidence that the tide of opinion in New York had shifted back toward laws protecting the unborn.

A few weeks before the 1972 referendum in Michigan, the polls showed that 56 percent of the people in Michigan supported the proposal to repeal laws against abortion. However, when the votes were counted, 61 percent voted down the repeal proposal. This was the last statewide test of abortion on demand before the Supreme Court imposed its own solution, and it represented an overwhelming rejection of the idea that individuals are answerable to no one other than themselves in the matter of abortion.

As the 1964 Congressional civil rights legislation indicates, these same citizens supported repeal of segregation and racial discrimination. The fact remains, however, that they would not willingly do the same for sexual "rights." Provided a level playing field, without any intervention by federal courts, citizens in almost every state and region rejected the absolute claims of sexual liberty. Remarkably, into the 1970s, the sexual revolution notwithstanding, citizens voted on these matters more or less the same as had their grandparents.

Earlier in this century Margaret Sanger claimed a right to be "a free, self-directed, autonomous personality." But when put to referendum, and when debat-

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ed in democratic assemblies, the American people have not approved such a "right." Whether it was the contraception debate of the WWI period, the abortion debate prior to *Roe*, or the homosexual and euthanasia debate today, whenever the people have had a chance to exercise their judgment, and whenever the terms of the debate are clear and not hidden behind judicial proceedings, the people have not and still will not buy this "right."

Perhaps the opinion polls are correct in reporting that Americans are "conflicted" over abortion. Garrow's account of the legislative history, however, shows that Americans never have been conflicted over the principle that anyone has a unilateral right such as the one asserted by the Supreme Court. Of course, this is not the lesson that Garrow wants us to draw from his book. But it is the one we ought to draw.

For the historical record, it should be remembered that on the eve of the federally compelled abortion "right" the citizens of Michigan voted overwhelmingly against it; and let the historical record show that twenty-one years later, on the eve of a federally mandated "right" to physician-assisted euthanasia, the citizens of Washington voted it down. The idea that the federal courts have merely facilitated the social and political agenda of the people is a myth. The idea that the issues of abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality are politically unmanageable, and must therefore be reserved for sub-political "cultural" discourse, is a myth. Regrettably, the pundits continue to overlook the most obvious and historically consistent datum: namely, the abrogation of the people's legislative judgment by federal courts. Before we condemn the people for their moral decline and insensitivity, the judicial violation of the political order must be fully considered.

Whatever injustice and moral harm is done to the unborn and the terminally ill, the political harm done by the federal courts is unforgivable. The courts have not only taken advantage of the uncertainties and doubts of the people concerning issues of major importance, but have taken away from them the political freedom of self-governance.

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The Balnibarbian Heresies

J. Budziszewski

The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary color, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in. — C. S. Lewis

Far away on the other side of the world is a marvelous land named Balnibarbi. As we learn from Mr. Gulliver, its capital is the great city of Lagado, and in this place is an even greater Academy, filled with the most brilliant people in the world. Unfortunately, Gulliver was able to stay at Lagado Academy for only a short while, and there were many interesting things about the Academy that he did not have an opportunity to find out. Having recently taken the opportunity for a longer visit, I offer my findings to readers in the Western hemisphere.

The oldest and most honorable department in the entire Academy of Lagado is devoted to the study of color. Indeed, the philosophy of color has been studied in Balnibarbi for something like twenty-four centuries. It was the Balnibarbian scholars, for instance, who first discovered that all of the colors in the universe come from just three primaries—yellow, red, and blue. The details are well-known even in our part of the world: orange is derived from red and yellow, green is derived from blue and yellow, purple is derived from blue and red, and so on. Of course the primary colors themselves are not derived from anything.

Unfortunately, over the last few hundred years the great tradition of Balnibarbian color philosophy has degenerated, as wave upon wave of intellectual revolution has swept the Lagado Academy. Those few scholars who still believe in the doctrine of primary colors are now considered reactionary, retrograde, regressive; in a word, not smart. The three main parties of Progress are the Monochromes, the Antichromes, and the Neochromes.

The Monochromes object to the theory of primary colors because they don't think it goes far enough. In their view, it's all well and good to say that orange comes from the primary colors red and yellow, purple comes from the primary colors red and blue, and so on, but what, they ask, is the ultimate basis of color? They reason that there must be an even more primary color than yellow, red, or blue—a fundamental color from which even the primary colors are derived. For instance, some of the Monochromes think the color from which all colors come is char-

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treuse. Others think it puce. The latest Monochromes identify it as plaid. A party of compromise, the Polychromes, works hard to miss the point: it tries to reconstruct the spectrum with primary colors of chartreuse, puce, *and* plaid. Although these theories have disappointing consequences for interior decorating, they are bold and original, and to be bold and original is of course the end of scholarship.

The Antichromes are the next party. Although they too reject the theory of primary colors, with their keener rods and cones they see right through the Monochromes. Chartreuse couldn't be the fundamental color, they observe, because all one can derive from it is various shades of greenish-yellow. Likewise puce couldn't be the fundamental color, because all one can derive from it is various shades of purplish-brown. Finally, plaid couldn't be the fundamental color because it isn't a color at all. The truth, say the Antichromes, is that there is *no* fundamental color from which even the primary colors can be derived. This is the crux. For if there is no fundamental color, then color has no Ultimate Basis; and if color has no Ultimate Basis, then color isn't real. This logic is so far beyond previous semblances of reason that it might almost be considered a new logic altogether. Its conclusions are equally breathtaking: everything that we call a color is just a figment of our imagination, a projection of some desperate human desire onto a universe of cold and monotonous shades of gray. For discovering the tragic truth, expressed in their motto, "Color is Dead," the Antichromes are rightly praised as pioneers. They eat only burnt toast and milk, and watch only black-and-white television.

Finally we come to the Neochromes, the most avant-garde party of all. They agree with the Antichromes that color has no Ultimate Basis; they agree that the universe is gray, hue and tint existing only in our imaginations; they agree that we create the blue of the night and the blush of the rose in our minds, rather than somehow discovering them in the order of things. But what, they ask, is so tragic about that? Is it not liberating? Smash the palettes! Pulverize the prisms! Away with the tyranny of yellow, red, and blue! The creator of color is MAN! Because of their verve and dash, the Neochromes, like the Monochromes, divide into factions. Individualist Neochromes say that every human being is entitled to his own primary colors. Communitarian Neochromes object that permitting every human being his own primary colors would lead to difficulty with traffic signals and things of that sort; although every country is entitled to its own primary colors, they say, individuals must toe the line. In the end, however, communitarianism comes to pretty much the same thing as individualism because no two communitarians can ever agree upon the spectrum their country should use. In a sort of compromise, they usually wind up mixing all the colors together and painting everything a tepid shade of brown. Even so they quarrel over whether it should be maple, beige, or taupe.

We too have a great tradition. Just as the Balnibarbians learned long ago that all color in the universe is derived from just a few primary colors, so we learned long ago that all moral law in the universe is derived from just a few primary moral laws. Just as the primary colors are the same for everyone, so these natural laws are the same for everyone. Just as the primary colors are recognized by all who hear of them, so these natural laws are recognized by all who hear of them. Just as the primary colors do not have to be derived from anything because they are the source of the other colors, so the natural laws do not have to be derived from anything because they are the source of the other moral laws. And just as the Balnibarbians have lost their ancient wisdom about color, so we have lost our ancient wisdom about morality. The colorblind lead the colorblind, and the blind the blind.

Let us further explore the parallel. In the first place we have thinkers who treat moral law as the Monochromes treat color. They insist on some ultimate value which they rank as even more fundamental than the natural law. As to what this ultimate value is, they divide, some naming pleasure, some naming liberty, some naming another value, such as privacy. Working hard, like the Polychromes, to miss the point, a party of compromise tries to reconstruct the moral law from fundamental values of pleasure, liberty, *and* privacy. Despite all their disagreement, these thinkers have one thing in common: any moral law that cannot be traced to their ultimate value they simply ignore. In this way they manage to ignore quite a bit.

In the second place we have thinkers who treat moral law as the Antichromes treat color. They insist that there is no real good and evil, no real right and wrong, and that the universe is merely an enormous screen onto which we project our desires and call them moral laws. According to Friedrich Nietzsche, the granddaddy of all such theorizers, God is dead, so everything is permitted.

Finally we have thinkers who treat moral law as the Neochromes treat color. Just as Neochromes think that human beings can create new primary colors, so these thinkers insist that human beings can create new and different moralities. Of course, this is absurd. If someone claimed to have created new primary colors, you could be sure that he had merely made a new blend of the old ones, and the same is true for the primary principles of good and evil.

For instance, you can make up a new rule that killing infants is right instead of wrong. Nobody can stop you. But if you want to get pregnant young women to believe it, the only way to do so is to confuse them about the moral laws they already know. Your first step will certainly be to turn down the volume on the law of love, which commands sacrificial

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care for the young, the innocent, and the helpless with whom God has trusted us. After that you might want to turn up the volume on the far less important law of shame, which commands avoidance of scandal. If you can induce hysteria and a feeling of being trapped, then you may even be able to make an illegitimate appeal to the law of self-preservation. Is it clear how this works? Just like a painter who likes two of the primary colors, dislikes the third primary color, and, after a little mixing, claims to have invented a new one.

Is our situation hopeless? I don't think so. True, not only the discipline of moral philosophy but the culture itself seems to be going down the tubes, and I think that if we had to save ourselves, we would be in a sorry state indeed. But what is impossible for man is possible for God; the faith itself got its first big chance during the era when Roman virtue was in decay. That didn't mean that Rome was preserved. Nevertheless a new civilization rose from its ashes.

For the teacher, faith is renewed by classroom experience. During a recent semester I taught Aristotle's *Ethics*. A young man came to me after class and said, "Professor, I've got to tell you that I'm getting scared." I asked him why. He replied, "Because you're scaring me. I'm shaking." I asked him, "How am I doing that?" He replied. "It's Aristotle. In this book of his he keeps talking about virtue." I asked him, "So?" He replied, "It's making me realize that I don't lead a virtuous life. And I'm shaking." The gospel of John teaches that the Holy Spirit came to bring the world conviction of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; I never thought He might use a pagan philosopher to do it.

On another occasion I was approached by a student who had spent months devouring not ancient, but contemporary, works of ethical and political theory—the sort of thing they study at Lagado Academy. He told me that he had been thinking about God, something he had never done before. He asked, "Do you think I'm crazy?" When I replied, "No," he was greatly relieved. But I asked, "What first made you think of God?" He replied, "None of these writers says anything about Him, and it seems to me that they're building their theories on nothing." The lesson was clear; his books had made him think of God not because they spoke of Him but because they did not. As in the dark night of John of the Cross, God had manifested Himself by the very fact of his apparent absence.

What does it mean to profess Christ in a university and world that seem bent on re-paganizing themselves? Pagans had the natural law. Christians have more than the natural law, because they have the gospel. Neo-pagans have less. This paradox requires explanation.

In one sense, of course, nobody can have less than the natural law: for its primary principles are nothing but those principles of right and wrong that we can't not know. As Paul explained in his letter to the Romans, God has written His law even on the hearts of the nations. This is why they had consciences just as Jews and Christians did. The law written on the heart is a birthright; it comes with being human.

But in another sense, anybody can have less than the natural law, for as each of us knows perfectly well, it is possible to know something at one level and yet deny it at another. We can't get rid of the law written on the heart, but we can try to write over it. The abortion movement, for instance, is a vast collective exercise in denial: an effort to expunge the guilt of killing one's children, not by repenting and throwing oneself upon the Lord of Mercy, but by getting others to join in the killing. Consciously, the activists deny that they have broken the natural law; unconsciously, they know they have and seek absolution in politics. What goes for many social movements goes double for many academic theories. In large part, denial is what the post-Christian University is about.

Just as Paul talked about the truths about God and his law that we can't not know, so he talked about the spiritual consequences of pretending that we don't know what we really do.

> For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. . . . Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind. (Romans 1:21-22a, 28a)

What I take this to mean is: if we throw away the knowledge that we don't want, we will lose the knowledge that we do want; if we try to deform our intellects, God will let us. The University may have forgotten that, but the heart remembers.

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Liberty Is a Lady

Gregory R. Beabout

Nadine Strossen, president of the ACLU, was in St. Louis recently to debate the question of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Calmly and articulately, she defended the many liberties that

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make our country great: the freedom to read child pornography in the comfort of your living room, the right to make an honest living as an abortionist, the independence to do whatever you want without institutional constraints. She expressed concern that in the nineties there seems to be a new attack on our American civil liberties. In our great cities, many citizens are no longer free to take a safe evening stroll down their neighborhood sidewalks. How can we make freedom complete?

As a fellow lover of freedom, I share certain of Ms. Strossen's concerns. Still, we had our disagreements. After the debate, I spoke with her about the meaning of freedom, and it became clear that some of our disagreements about certain of the civil liberties she held particularly dear came down to a difference in our understandings of liberty. Our discussion led to talk about the etymology of the term freedom. Now, the primary etymological sense of the term "free" is "dear, beloved." The root comes from the Old High German "*frī*," which stems from the Indo-European root "*prijos*" (dear, beloved) and is related to the Sanskrit "*priyás*" (dear) and "*priyā*" (wife, daughter). Likewise, there is a connection with the Old English "*frīgu*" (love) and "*frēon*" (friend). The German and Celtic meaning, "not in bondage or subject to control from outside," comes from calling "dear" (*frī*) those members of a household connected by ties of kindred with the family head. A free person is as a friend or beloved, one joined to another in mutual benevolence and intimacy. In Danish, this connection between freedom and love is captured in the verb "*frie*," which means "to propose," that is, "to make an offer of marriage." Thus, the Danish word for betrothal captures both the sense of free choice and the sense of harmonious love.

The connection between freedom and a loving wife is made clear in Old Norse mythology. The Teutonic goddess Frigg is the wife of Odin. In Old High German, she was called Frija; in Lombard, Frea. In English, the sixth day of the week, Friday, is named after her. Friday is the day we celebrate the freedom of Frigg. In Romance languages, Friday is named after Venus, as both are goddesses of love. Mythologically, Frigg represents love and unconstrained devotion. Frigg is related to Odin in love. (Wednesday is named after Odin, the chief Norse god.) Frigg stays with Odin because she is free. She is not forced, like Odin's slaves, to stay with him. Odin dwells in Frigg's bosom. Frigg personifies the primordial connection between freedom and love. As the foremost goddess in Eddic mythology, Frigg was invoked by the childless for comfort and aid. She is considered genial, a promoter of marriage and fertility, a loving helper.

This sense of freedom as a loving woman continues to resonate with us. Artistic depictions, like the Statue of Liberty and Delacroix's famous painting of "Liberty Leading the People," always portray freedom as a lady whose love brings people together.

What comes from thinking that liberty is a lady? What is to be learned from thinking that true freedom has its basis in love? While I was thinking about these questions, Ms. Strossen also appeared to be deep in thought. Her observation was unexpected. She asked me, "I wonder what Catherine MacKinnon would think about saying that freedom is a loving woman?"

Alas, Ms. Strossen was called away, and we were unable to continue our conversation, but providence or chance has a way of doing that sometimes, so I have had to carry on the conversation with myself. MacKinnon on freedom as a devoted wife: it was a haunting suggestion, and I have spent some time thinking about the possibilities.

Even in my first reading of her acclaimed *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, I saw that Catharine MacKinnon is no ordinary radical. In her I recognized one of those writers who has a style deserving of special hermeneutical care. At first, I thought that she should be read in a way analogous to the method of watching drama recommended by Kierkegaard's aesthete: come in late and watch only the third scene of the second act. I'm sure that there are many readers like me who have used this interpretive technique with Catharine MacKinnon's writings. Skip the boring stuff on Marx and Engels and go right to the juicy stuff on rape, abortion, and pornography. That's all I've heard most people talk about anyway, so I was confident that I was on to the right approach.

Even using this time-tested hermeneutical principle, I was left with the problem of how to approach the text. To be sure, MacKinnon's writing yields numerous pleasures, but what are the proper fruits to gather from so ripe a source? Initially, I found myself reading her the way a fourteen-year-old schoolboy used to read a smuggled copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. At first there is the confusion of having to work through something more difficult than expected. Why did they tell me that this was forbidden? Where's the "good" part? Then everything changes: a word you've never seen in print before. With MacKinnon, its just that you've never seen such vulgarity in a book printed by Harvard University Press. There is that brief moment of piqued excitement. The academic smell of the musty clothbound volume usually associated with long, arduous tomes that rarely excite is transformed into a momentary rush of blood. Her writing has been building up to it, and now the "F" word jumps off the page, swirls into association with the fleshy feel of the textured paper and the dusty smell of cultured print filling the head. Enough erudite truck driver talk. The day's reading is done.

Experience has shown that this is not ultimately the correct interpretive approach to MacKin-

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non's work. First, this sort of satisfaction is too short-lived. It is something like the pleasure derived from turning on the car radio in the morning, expecting to hear Paul Harvey with the rest of the story, but the kids have been playing with the knobs again. Instead of the deep tones of Paul Harvey, it's Howard Stern's whine describing an adventure with his pet cat. A moment of distracted confusion. What is this? Then the delay before changing the station. Interest has taken hold. Is he really talking about what I think? Has it come to that? The double entendre has given way to the explicitly crude. Now the source of pleasure changes. Instead of the lapsed delight that comes from accidentally hearing a description of rank bestiality, there is the brief relish of knowing that the culture is doomed, that by the turn of the century there will probably be wild animals taking over downtown, as when wolves used to turn up the Appian Way to the Capitoline Hill in the sixth century. Alasdair MacIntyre is right: the barbarians have been ruling us for quite some time.

But these kinds of pleasure don't last. It might have been exciting to see a profane word in a Harvard University Press publication once, but in an age when Michael Jackson grabs his crotch at halftime during the Super Bowl, it's unlikely that one will happen upon much prurient pleasure from a scholarly book on legal theory spiced with vulgarities, and even more difficult to feel better than others by realizing that our culture is dying. Just about everyone sees the clouds by now, and there's very little satisfaction in secretly glimpsing the obvious.

A more insightful interpretation of MacKinnon comes from focusing not simply on her occasionally lurid vocabulary, but on the anger that stands behind her argument. Every careful reader will discern that beneath the text, there is a rage as powerful as that of a four-year-old having an all-out tantrum. My wife and I used to be filled with amazement when our daughter would throw herself on the floor in a fit and begin thrashing. I suppose that some parents, in frustration, immediately try to stop the screaming. Still, I trust that many have done what we did on more than one occasion: we let the tantrum run its course. My wife and I would share a secret glance of amazement at the power and force of the screams. Together we produced this child, and now, through sheer force and will, she is on the verge of screaming until her voice is lost. What energy! What commitment! What would it be like to be able to focus all of one's anger to such a point? Surely MacKinnon's editors must feel the same way: do we try to comfort her, or should we let her continue to shriek? Solace would no doubt be ruinous to her scholarship. Let us celebrate the puissance of guided grief. Why can't we all learn to direct our miseries in this way? If we could only teach our four-year-olds who have tantrums to use footnotes as effectively as MacKinnon, we could fill the world with angry scholars enough for every prestigious university press.

What an unfortunate circumstance that MacKinnon's talents are wasted here in North America. If only she had been in Czechoslovakia ten years ago, or in the Soviet Union in the late forties, she could be world-renowned. They would have locked her away for her radical ideas, if not for her outrageous claims. As with Vaclav Havel, the whole world would have come to her in sympathy. If only MacKinnon had been sent to Siberia to continue her project secretly from her cell in the work camp, more people might listen and tremble.

But alas, in these United States, you can write about whatever you want and no one seems to notice much. You can stand on the steps of the State House and declaim preposterousness, and most people just walk by without much notice. Or worse, an east coast academic publisher will print you. Next, *Newsweek* runs an article about you. Before long, your fifteen minutes of Warholian attention runs out. The curse of being a radical in America: instead of getting thrown in prison like Socrates for presenting ideas that challenge the established order and corrupt the youth, you become part of the white noise of the popular culture.

The problem now is not that your ideas are ignored, but that they are competing on the same level as Jay Leno's monologue and Regis' chatter with Kathie Lee about the injustice of that call in the fourth quarter of Saturday's Notre Dame game. Imagine Sally Jessy Raphael interviewing Thomas à Becket: "Alright, Tom, now why are you being so insistent about all of this?" A confused look from Becket. Cut to the commercial. The narrator announces, "Tomorrow, gay men who enjoy watching their mates make love to women." What if instead of using totalitarian force, Stalin used a devious Communist plot à la Orwell's *Animal Farm* to transform the meaning of free expression? Any one can freely say what he wants and no one will take him very seriously.

Still, MacKinnon's skill as a writer demands that we do more than go behind the text to adore the anger that generates her power. We should also praise her skill in developing her argument, for she stands in a line of underappreciated American rhetoricians, the Puritans. Even before Santayana, virtually every generation of Americans had declared that it had identified the Last Puritan in America. And yet, each new generation seems to create its own kind of Jonathan Edwards, so it is time for some skilled moviemaker to produce a film that will bring the glories of puritanism back to their rightful place of esteem in American life. MacKinnon could be a model of the new feminist puritan.

From the time of the early New England preachers, it has been recognized that the key to the skilled

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sermon is not volume but heat. The way to create heat is the ability to manipulate emotions. Of course, the most effective emotion to manipulate is guilt. Like the best pastor in the Old North Church, MacKinnon does not begin by shouting. She is calm, dispassionate, matter-of-fact. She refers to scholarly texts, to state laws, to legal precedent.

Like the artisan who sits in his pew listening to the sermon, her reader is well dressed and attentive. "Yes," he thinks, "it is terrible how rape has gone on in our culture." She turns to him now and is stern. The law is male. It has been written by males for males. "Yes," he thinks, "it is true, the law has been oppressive to women." Just as the puritanical preacher is more effective with upstanding citizens who feel guilt than with criminals who don't, MacKinnon's reader is unbuttoning his vest. She has hooked a secret shame. Now to turn up the heat.

She draws a distinction between virginal young girls and prostitutes. Look how the law treats them differently. This is a male distinction. "Yes," he thinks, "it is true, the law does impose a male perspective." Why is it effectively legal to rape a prostitute? she asks. Her voice is building here. She needs this point in her "argument." If he consents here, she has him. "Yes," he thinks, "it is true, the law does treat the prostitute as having consented." Her eyes light up now, her voice is swelling. The male-made law says that you may rape a prostitute because it assumes that men can do whatever they want with her. The male-made law says that you may rape your wife because it assumes that men can do whatever they want with her. Her reader is sweating now. He feels guilty. He knows that he has talked his wife into having sex even when she was tired. His heartbeat has increased. A single bead of sweat begins to drip down his forehead. What is heterosexuality? she asks. It is "the eroticization of dominance and submission"; it is "males over females." The system works by perpetrating powerful masculinity over inferior female victims, exploiting women for the enjoyment of men.

She turns now to the women in the congregation. Most of you have been sexually abused as children. Some of you are too repressed to remember it. Most of you have been raped. Some of you are afraid to admit it. Some of you are raped every day, and you aren't even aware of it. This is the result of being duped by a system of male-dominated laws. The law is made by men and for men. Men, you are all rapists. Wives, you are all whores.

Here is a skill even more remarkable than that of the most talented clergyman. The good reverend would measure the human heart against a higher reality, God's decrees which transcend the human laws of this world. Sitting in the pew, our listener may appear outwardly just and upright, but God, who peers directly into the human heart, sees what is really there. MacKinnon's skill is greater, for she makes no appeal to a higher court, and yet she is able to draw a conclusion contrary to reality. She has the ability to look lawyers and scholars in the face—intellectuals who have long ago given up stock in the transcendent world—and she convinces them that they are rapists and whores. Let us applaud her skill in argumentation, if specious. Let us marvel at her rhetorical mastery, if demagogic.

Quietly, let us hope that no one is so rude as to point out that MacKinnon's conclusion is a fiction. Most men aren't rapists. Most women aren't prostitutes.

Thus our interpretive framework, that MacKinnon means what she says, has shipwrecked itself on the truth. Reality is a stubborn thing. But our age lacks visionaries, so maybe we ought not to criticize a prophetess when she comes along. Just because she creates a fiction, should we abandon her insights? How should we approach MacKinnon's poetry? How should we understand her myths? Or as Nadine Strossen asked me, "I wonder what Catharine MacKinnon would say about freedom being a devoted wife?" Perhaps there is a kernel of truth in MacKinnon's feminist theory of law, a teaching about the meaning of freedom.

The origin of the meaning of freedom is the love of a devoted wife, the most high goddess of the Norse. But the Latin "liberty" also stems from a goddess, *Libertas*, who was worshipped in ancient Rome as the personification of freedom. Her temple was set up on the Aventine Hill by Tiberius Gracchus in the second Punic war. After suffering successive destructions, the temple was rebuilt by Asinius Pollio and its atrium was used as a library to store census tablets. A statue of *Libertas* was erected by Clodius on the site of Cicero's house. In Latin, *liberi* are children, sons and daughters of their parents, literally the free members of a household. The root *liber* comes from the Greek *eneuvepoc* (free) which originally meant "belonging to the people" or "of legal descent." The Greek term is in turn derived from the Indo-European base *leudhero-* (people, family, nation) which comes from the Indo-European *leudh* (to grow). Thus, those who have ties as a family, who are part of our people, who have grown from us, are free. Lady *Libertas* personifies the freedom of being a part of the family.

If we take this cue—that in some sense liberty is a lady, that the true source of freedom is love, the love that a devoted spouse has for one's beloved—where does it take us? Freedom's care for the beloved involves a decision for which one is responsible, and we have retained this emphasis on choice. But the notion of freedom as a loving communion seems to be virtually lost. To the modern ear, "I am free" has come to mean simply "I choose" or "I can decide for myself, without interference." This emphasis on the freedom to choose—independently, unencumbered by others—increasingly comes to view traditional institu-

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tions as the main obstacles to freedom. Don't have your personal dreams hampered by an outdated heritage. Don't let your family influence your choice. Don't let the church restrict your decision. Don't let your friends hold you back. Don't let your spouse limit who you can be. Don't let established standards be imposed on you. Don't let the masculine system determine your choice. O soul, repressless, you should be free to do as you please, to choose what you want. A free choice is yours, and yours alone.

In separating freedom's ability to choose from the loving communion that frees, liberty has been abused, dismembered, and raped. The wholeness of the woman of freedom has been reduced to the receptacle of choice. Lady Liberty has been neutered, so that the flesh of freedom has been stripped off, the tenderness vanquished, the feminine personality plundered. When this disrobed freedom delivers her promise of independence, it's not clear whether we really want what we are asking for. What blessings do we hope to secure from liberty? The huddled masses yearning to breathe free end up finding that the independence to be an individualist leaves one feeling alone, alienated, bored, anxious, lost, and scared to go out at night.

In a certain way, MacKinnon may be right. Perhaps there is a metaphorical sense in which the masculinity of a certain kind of law has stripped and raped freedom of its substance. Freedom—the lady of liberty—has been raped. She has been treated as an object for manipulation by sacrificing the loving communion at the heart of freedom for an overemphasis on the element of individual choice. When freedom becomes nothing more than unobstructed choice, the promise of freedom no longer has anything to do with love. Freedom actually comes to mean the guarantee of the right to make bad choices, choices that fracture families, choices that break down the relationship between members of the community, choices that destroy our efforts at forming a more perfect union, and ultimately choices that ravage freedom.

At this metaphorical level, MacKinnon has unwittingly captured a more profound criticism of the ACLU's account of liberal rights than she may know. It is unfortunate not only that MacKinnon seems to be, like Strossen, ironically unaware of the importance of the feminine in the origin of the idea of freedom, but also that MacKinnon's account of the relations between men and women offers little room for the love that would help us more fully strive to make freedom complete.

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On The Other Hand

Toward A Disease-Free America

Peter L. Berger

From the *New York Times-Advocate,* January 20, 2002:

As widely expected, President Hillary Rodham's State of the Union Address dealt mostly with the Crusade for a Healthy America that had been the major initiative of the first year of her administration. The President spoke with her usual eloquence, apparently without a written text or notes. She was frequently interrupted by tumultuous applause from members of both houses of Congress, the first elected under the quota system set up by the Equitable Representation Act of 1998.

There was some surprise evinced about the lengthy and generous credit given by the President to the achievements of her ex-husband's two administrations, which, she said, had laid the foundations of the present initiative in health policy. She cited, of course, the establishment of the National Health Security System (NHSS), pointing out that it had been President Clinton's achievements in foreign policy which had made it possible for the nation, freed from the distractions of its foreign entanglements of an earlier period, to grapple successfully with its internal problems.

During the second Clinton Administration the United States had finally been placed in a position to put its own house in order by ceasing to be drawn into the endless overseas quagmires so sapping of its energies in the past. There was the withdrawal of all American troops from countries outside the Hemisphere; the resignation of the United States from NATO and from GATT; the inauguration of the tariff regime of the Americas Free Trade Community, which drastically cut disadvantageous economic relations with Europe and East Asia; and the breaking of diplomatic relations with all countries failing to meet the certification criteria of the State Department's Democracy and Human Rights Inspectorate. President Rodham expressed some regret that American citizens were now barred from travel in most areas outside the Hemisphere, but in any case, as she put it, "Americans have little desire to travel to places where gays and lesbians cannot marry, where reproductive rights are not protected, and where smoke is blown in their faces and lethal food put on their

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plates in every restaurant."

The President noted that The Crusade for a Healthy America, under the able leadership of Health Czarperson Chelsea Rabinowitz-Hakamoto, has been engaged in two types of activities—completing the process begun with the establishment of NHSS, and starting out in new directions toward the stated goal of "A Disease-Free America by Mid-Century." In the President's words: "We are serious about this. By the middle of this century most Americans will die of old age—and we are working on that too." A few critics (Republicans, under the new electoral system, reduced to a mere 10 percent in the two houses of Congress) pointed out that this statement was not completely accurate, since a sizable number of Americans were excluded from NHSS by non-eligibility rules: notably recalcitrant drug-users, smokers, and individuals consuming alcoholic beverages above the NHSS-approved level. The President acknowledged this by remarking that "Unfortunately, there will always be some people who will deliberately *choose* disease-generating lifestyles." She added: "This should not divert the great majority of our fellow-citizens from achieving the healthy life span that advanced medical science and sound health policy has now placed within their reach."

The President devoted some time to measures falling under the heading of unfinished business. These include the enactment of additional NHSS regulations concerning the rationing of medical services for individuals over the age of sixty-five, the clarification of rules presently governing physician-assisted life-termination, and penalties for patients seeking so-called "private" medical care outside NHSS (thus far only doctors providing such care have been subject to criminal prosecution). The President promised that she will propose legislation to Congress on these matters in the near future. Other unfinished business pertains to the Comprehensive Anti-Tobacco Act of 1996. The President will propose legislation that would allow officers of NHSS and the Department of Social Services to remove minor children from homes where smoking is practiced, to provide funds for more prison space to accommodate the growing number of people convicted of illegal tobacco trafficking, and to authorize the use of American military forces to assist Hemisphere governments in the suppression of tobacco cultivation.

The major new direction announced by the President is a campaign against cholesterol. "Every five minutes an American dies of cardiovascular disease. We will not tolerate this human waste any longer," the President declared to unrestrained applause. Czarperson Rabinowitz-Hakamoto has, she said, been instructed to take a number of measures immediately under a Presidential directive—requiring warning labels on all food products exceeding FDA-approved levels of fat and cholesterol, instructing the Customs Service to interdict the import of such foods, and launching a massive public education program to encourage sound nutritional habits. Congress will be asked to prohibit all advertising of unhealthy food products, to authorize FDA inspectors to enter restaurant kitchens at will to monitor compliance with nutritional guidelines, and to enact tax incentives for individuals who can provide proof of engaging in regular aerobic exercise. Rabinowitz-Hakamoto will coordinate the efforts of all Federal agencies in the anti-cholesterol campaign—in addition to NHSS, the FDA, OSHA, Treasury, Department of Education, IRS, FBI and, if indicated, the Pentagon as well.

"A famous economist once said that a nation's soul is revealed in the government budget," the President said. "When all the measures I have proposed here are enacted, health and health-related activities will account for 70 percent of the Federal budget—ten times, I may add, the portion allocated to defense. We can, I believe," she continued, "be supremely satisfied by the state of America's soul."

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The Sinner and the Fool

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

When we read of a murder in the newspapers or hear of one on television, we often read or hear that it was "senseless." Observers offer this characterization not only of drive-by homicides or the methodical shooting of strangers by a crazed killer on a crowded subway train, but also of the first-degree murder of a businessman by his greedy partner, or the enraged slaying of a wife by her jealous husband—even of murders committed in the course of robberies and rapes. Indeed, we hear of almost any murder that it was "a senseless slaying," "a senseless act," an example of the "senseless violence" that keeps threatening society.

But why *senseless*? After all, unless the killer was grossly impaired, the killing probably made sense to *him*. He was trying to silence a witness, or gain revenge, or express his power, or act out his racist hatred, or stimulate and satisfy his lust. In a culture whose up-to-date intellectuals often drift toward moral subjectivism, how can an act that makes perfectly good sense to its perpetrator be judged senseless by outsiders? The outsiders cannot mean that the act was motiveless. Do they mean, then, that the act was unintelligent? That it lacked alertness, say, or foresight? Do they think that the killer stupidly miscalculated the odds of getting away with murder?

Not likely. The truth is that, when pressed, even the most avant-garde observer drops his moral subjectivism, forgets all Nietzschean attempts to get "beyond good and evil," and joins the rest of us in expressing shock, indignation, and the metaphysical judgment that a murder *does not belong in the world*, no matter what its author thinks of it. The murder of a human being is "not the way it's supposed to be." This act is out of order. It is senseless because it saws against the grain of the universe, because, as Christian believers would say, it doesn't fit the divine plan for peace and comity.

Senseless is only one word people use to express this conviction. People who prefer not to judge or confess sin will nonetheless concede that some objectionable act was stupid, tragic, shortsighted, mistaken, unfortunate, miscalculated, erring, regrettable, or out of line. Suppose a white-collar criminal, for example, confesses to a "judgmental lapse" or to "inappropriate behavior" after cheating thousands of retirees out of their life savings. Despite the ludicrous and cowardly nature of his euphemism, the criminal has nonetheless admitted that he was wrong in an important way. He has admitted that he was out of order, out of line—that he was, in a word, *foolish*. He will not concede that he has been a knave, but he feels obliged to concede, in effect, that he has been a fool.

By so doing, ironically enough, he enters a mainstream of biblical thought, and a route to the biblical concept of sin. For biblical writers think of sin as the main species of folly. Indeed, if a person confesses folly, and then admits that he is to blame for his folly, he has as good as confessed his sin. A person who calls his theft of two packages of AA batteries from a supermarket checkout display "inappropriate" or a "lapse in judgment" thus puts us in position to reflect not only on folly, but also on the nature of sin, and then to deepen our understanding of both by exploring the relation between them.

I

In order to carry out this reflection, we must first understand the biblical concept of wisdom. In the literature of Scripture, wisdom is, broadly speaking, the knowledge of God's world and the knack of fitting oneself into it. The wise person knows creation.

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He knows its boundaries and limits, understands its laws and rhythms, discerns its times and seasons, respects its great dynamics. He understands that creation possesses its own integrity and significance quite apart from his claim on it, and quite apart from any possibility that creation will make him happy. The wise person *gives in* to creation, and he gives in to God, and he does the first because he does the second. He knows that the earth is the Lord's, and so the fullness thereof. He knows that wisdom itself is the Lord's. He knows some of the deep grains and textures of the world because he knows some of the ways and habits of its maker.

In the biblical view, the wise are righteous and the righteous are wise: these are people who love and fear God, affirm God's world, live gladly within its borders, and make music there according to divine time and key signatures. The wise are always "in order." Insofar as they live right, they also live well. The Book of Proverbs doesn't for the most part even bother to distinguish righteousness and wisdom: it pairs righteousness with wisdom and wickedness with folly in such a way that the distinction between a moral judgment and a prudential one fades. In Scripture more generally, the standard for judging the course of a human life includes a blend of morality, prudence, metaphysics, and religion. Thus the Scripture writers exhort, but they also instruct. As Frederick Buechner once pointed out:

> The Bible is not first of all a book of moral truth. I would call it instead a book of truth about the way life is. Those strange old scriptures present life as having been ordered in a certain way, with certain laws as inextricably built into it as the law of gravity is built into the physical universe. When Jesus says that whoever would save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life will save it, surely he is not making a statement about how, morally speaking, life *ought* to be. Rather, he is making a statement about how life *is*.

Wisdom is a reality-based phenomenon. To be wise is to know reality, to *discern* it. A discerning person notices things, attends to things, picks up on things. He notices the difference between tolerance and forgiveness, pleasure and joy, sentimentality and compassion. Where high-profile athletes are concerned, he can tell the difference between celebrities and heroes. He can spot real humility and keep it distinct in his mind from its thinner cousin, unpretentiousness. (Consider the ambiguity of the claim, "He's a humble man," which might mean that the man virtuously sees others as his equal, or else might mean that he leads a lowly life and never pretends otherwise.)

Discernment, in other words, shows a kind of attentive respect for reality. Thus the discerning person notices not only the differences between things, but also the connections between them. He knows what God has put together and what God has kept asunder, and can therefore spot the fractures and alloys introduced by human violation of creation. He knows, for instance, the way a particular sort of request can contaminate a friendship. Moreover, he possesses an eye for such oddities of reality as the anxieties that sometimes lie behind overbred chitchat, namedropping, and the overuse of foreign phrases at dinner parties. He knows that kindness sometimes coexists with stupidity and integrity with humorlessness. He knows that people full of shadows may also be full of a light that causes them. In these and other respects, Lewis Smedes remarks, "a discerning person has the makings of a connoisseur."

But such "cognitive discernment," as Smedes calls it, isn't enough. The really discerning person, the one whose discernment marks genuine wisdom, does not merely inspect reality, or analyze it: the one who discerns also loves. He possesses what Jonathan Edwards called "benevolence to being in general." At some level, he affirms the reality he knows, and even commits himself to it. Just as the knowledge of God in the theology of Calvin includes active engagement with God (what students of Calvin call acknowledgment of God, or existential knowledge of God), so knowledge of God's creation and deep perception of its creatures requires the commitment of the knower.

To discern realities at their deeper levels, we have to become engaged in them, to bring both empathy and care to what we know. Discernment of the hopes and fears of other persons, for example, depends on compassion for them: knowledge of these persons comes in to us only if our hearts go out to them. Only so, Smedes remarks, can we see behind the status of divorce, or homosexuality, or disability to discover complex persons who possess wholeness greater than their troubles, gifts unseen by the unloving.

To be wise, then, is to know and affirm reality, and to speak and act accordingly. The wise accommodate themselves to reality. They go with the flow. They tear along the perforated line. They attempt their harvests in season. Ordinary people proceed with such a program no matter whether they have derived their wisdom from Scripture or from more general revelation. From Proverbs, or from absorbent attention to the life played out before them, or even from their grandmother, the wise eventually learn, and then accommodate themselves to, such truths as these:

> The more you talk, the less people listen.
>
> If your word is no good, people will not trust you and it is then useless to protest this fact.
>
> Trying to cure distress with the same thing that caused it only makes matters worse.
>
> If you refuse to work hard and take pains, you are unlikely to do much of any consequence.

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Boasting of your accomplishments does not make people admire them. Boasting is vain in both senses of the word.

Envy of fat cats does not make them slimmer, and will anyhow rot your bones.

If you scratch certain itches, they just itch more.

Many valuable things, including happiness and deep sleep, come to us only if we do not try hard for them.

II

In a famous incident, the World Health Organization once tried to assist residents of Borneo in the extermination of houseflies, which were widely suspected of spreading disease there. Officials sprayed the insides of Borneo houses with large quantities of DDT, an action that triggered an unforeseen and nearly disastrous sequence of events. As the flies died, local gecko lizards (their natural predator) feasted on the fly corpses and sickened from the DDT concentrated in them. Their sick condition made the geckos easy prey for housecats, who ate their fill of the DDT-poisoned geckos and likewise sickened and died. The loss of the cats gave rats free run of people's houses. When the rats began to devour house food and to threaten people with serious disease—in particular, with bubonic plague—panicky government officials scrambled for solutions. At last they resorted to *feles ex machina*: they arranged for large numbers of foreign cats to be parachuted into the area in order to mend the break in the food chain.

If wisdom is knowledge of God's world and the knack of fitting oneself into it, then, predictably, folly is contrariness or destitution in these areas—a kind of witlessness with respect to the world and a tendency either to bang one's shins and scrape one's elbows on it, or else to miss its opportunities and waste its gifts.

Many, but not all, instances of folly count as sin. Suppose a person unthinkingly places a subway ad that reads, ILLITERATE? WRITE TODAY FOR FREE HELP! Suppose, in one of his speeches, a politician says with an air of significance, "Things are more like they are now than they have ever been." Or suppose a presidential candidate campaigning in a department store feels a hand in his back, whirls to shake it, and discovers that he has taken the hand of a mannequin. Small campaign bloopers, playful nonsense, ridiculous puns, two-headed headlines ("Grandmother of Eight Makes Hole in One"), portentously delivered commonplaces or confusions, and other such gentle mischief scarcely qualify as evil, let alone as sin. These small follies do not disturb peace and comity; some of them may even contribute to it.

We find such follies amusing, not blameworthy. Even such industrial-strength folly as the food chain foulup in Borneo may have been wholly innocent, at least the first time. Common sense tells us that a lot of things human beings do are loopy, but not sinful, and that the right response to those things is a guffaw, not a rebuke. Common sense also tells us that some things human beings do are loopy *and* sinful (a bank robber, responding to a teller's inspired request, fills in a withdrawal slip with his real name and address), and that the right response is amazement.

In the kingdom of folly we find a whole circus of wonders—carelessness, for example, and other attention-deficit disorders. We find discernment deficits. In a familiar lapse of discernment, certain contemporary fiction in adolescent fashion conflates love, romance, and sexual obsession, as if they were all the same thing. Then there is plain poor judgment. Consider middle-aged parents who want to become chums with their teenaged children, or who try to buy their children's love. Consider parents who sense some lack in themselves and try to get their children to fill it. Whether in peer popularity, or athletics, or money-making, or intellectual achievement, parents who have disappointed their own expectations often double them for their children. Then, when children resist, these parents feel wounded.

Of course, poor judgment may handicap the learned as well as the ignorant. Some of us have met people who can speak three or four languages, but cannot say anything sensible in any of them. There is no contradiction, said C. S. Lewis, in being a Master of Arts and a fool. The reason is that intelligence and education are only raw materials for good judgment. The same is true of knowledge, attentiveness, and discernment. Using them, a person must also estimate, appraise, and infer. He must conclude, choose, and act—all in a way that is firmly based in reality and relatively undistorted by personal whim and bias.

Folly includes poor judgment, lack of discernment, inattentiveness. These deficiencies may be innocent or partly innocent: perhaps God distributes common sense and alertness as gifts, and distributes them as unequally as foot speed and good looks. Perhaps common sense and alertness can also, to some degree, be taught by family members and teachers. Indeed, Scripture sometimes talks as if wisdom is a gift and sometimes as if it is an acquired discipline. In either case, no doubt, people vary widely in their mere access to it.

But they also vary widely in their *attitude* toward wisdom. Some attend to a parent's teaching and some ignore it. Some listen with interest to the Word of God, and some scoff at it. Some welcome criticism and seek to learn from it; others automatically assume that every criticism is unjust, or even irrelevant.

These facts lead us to consider another: while some folly is relatively innocent and some pretty funny, a good deal of it is neither. Teachers and preachers who would rather be fashionable than faithful; par-

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ents who prefabricate their children's lives in order to fulfill dreams; undiscerning Christians who prefer comfort to compassion, who cannot be bothered to look at human trouble and cannot be provoked to feel it because they have closed the door to their hearts—some of these persons have involved themselves in culpable folly.

As this last example suggests, the foolish gain their status not only by what they do, but also by what they fail to do. Carelessness of one's health, neglect of one's marriage or children, obliviousness to one's calling, disregard of one's faults, and other inattentions to duty and opportunity belong in the large class of follies of omission. Naturally enough, because wisdom is essentially a practical matter—less a body of knowledge than a way of applying it, less a fine art than a knack—the follies of omission often take the form of simple failure to "follow through." People know what's right, but simply don't do it—like all those well-educated libertines who have become AIDS encyclopedias without ever practicing either chastity or "safe" sex.

III

The shortest and clearest way to state the relation between sin and folly is to say that not all folly is sin, but all sin is folly. Sin is both wrong and dumb. Indeed, wherever the follies are playing, sin is the main event. Sin is the world's most impressive *example* of folly.

What is it about sin that makes it so foolish? Sin is the wrong recipe for good health; sin is the wrong gasoline to run human life on; sin is the wrong direction and the wrong road to get home. In other words, sin is finally futile.

Pride, for example, is futile because self-fascination is so often unrequited. Moreover, pride is subject to the tolerance effect, the law of diminishing returns: the more self-absorbed we are, the less there is to find absorbing. Commenting on some themes in Ernest Becker's *Denial of Death*, Robert Roberts adds that the pride project in human life—the attempt to become our own first cause—is carried on by people who are riven with the knowledge that though they may be gods, transcendent above the rest of creation, they are also worms and food for worms. We live with "the dreadful contradiction lying drugged and groggy in our bosoms: the need to be heroes and the fact of being worms."

What's more, we try to resolve this contradiction by adopting another: we try to exalt ourselves by meeting other people's standards of acceptability. What would be the point of doing thunderous slam dunks or of performing rock songs if everybody just yawned? Our goodness (being known, admired, envied) depends on the standards and opinions of people just as riven as we are. "Stars" are really only moons, says Roberts, drawing upon and reflecting the light of others.

> Apart from the values which we breathe cozily in our social environment, our behavior and our self-esteem would suffocate, and our psychological identity would expire. Anyone who opens his eyes will see how contradictory is the project of divine self-creation on the basis of what other people think; and yet this is what we do. Few of us are in a position to make ourselves as obviously absurd as King Elvis, but in our "humbler" ways our project is the same.

Hubris is the first and most popular form of idolatry. But all forms of idolatry involve us deeply in folly. All idolatry is not only treacherous, but also futile. Human desire, deep and restless and seemingly unfulfillable, keeps stuffing itself with finite goods, but these cannot satisfy. If we try to fill our hearts with anything besides the God of the universe, we find that we are overfed but undernourished, and that day by day, week by week, year after year, we are thinning down to a mere outline of a human being.

Sad to say, this kind of thing happens all the time. People hungry for love, people who want to "connect," open up a sequence of shallow, self-seeking relationships with other shallow, self-seeking persons, and find that at the end of the day they are emptier than when they began. The whole project has been as idle and dehumanizing as the conversations on those dating-and-mating TV programs that explore the sump level of lubriciousness. Beneath all their surface liveliness, the sadness of these programs is that they reduce their participants to mere leering silhouettes.

Sin is futile and therefore foolish. Georges Bernanos' country priest remarks that Satan has involved himself in a hopeless program of swimming against the stream of the universe, of "wearing himself out in absurd, terrifying attempts to reconstruct in the opposite direction the whole work of the Creator." Thus, while moral evil is destructive, and sometimes infuriating, it is also in some way ludicrous. Mere Christianity, says C. S. Lewis, commits us to believing that "the Devil is (in the long run) an ass."

Sin is folly: no matter what images they choose, the writers of the Bible say this again and again. Sin is missing the target; sin is choosing the *wrong* target. Sin is wandering from the path, or rebellion against someone too strong for us, or neglecting a good inheritance. Above all, at its core, sin is offense against God.

Why is it not only wrong but also foolish to offend God? God is our final good, our maker and savior, the one in whom alone our restless hearts come to rest. To rebel against God is to saw off the branch that supports us. As Richard Lovelace remarks, to flee from God to some far country and to search for

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fulfillment there is to find only "black-market substitutes": instead of joy, the buzz in your temples from four or five martinis; instead of self-giving love, sex with strangers; instead of a parent's unconditional enthusiasm for you as a person, only the professional support of a fashionable therapist who will indeed pump up your ego whenever it loses pressure, but who also keeps his meter running. Rebellion against God and flight from God remove us from the sphere of blessing; these moves cut us off from our only invisible means of support.

Thus sin dissipates us in futile projects, but also in self-destructive ones. Sin hurts other people and grieves God, but it also corrodes *us*. Sin is a form of self-abuse. Promiscuous persons, for example, coarsen themselves. They disqualify themselves for the deepest forms of intimacy, the ones bonded by trust, and "condemn themselves to social superficiality," as one of my friends once put it. Something similar is true of liars and cheats. As Christopher Lasch remarks, "Whoever cheats his neighbor forfeits his neighbor's trust, imprisons himself behind a wall of enmity and suspicion, and thus cuts himself off from his fellows." Envy—the displeasure at another's good and the urge to despoil him of it—traps and torments the envier, turning his life into a hell of resentment. Proud persons isolate themselves. Pride aborts the very possibility of real friendship or communion, namely, "benevolence toward being in general."

More basically, pride amounts to a kind of phantom wisdom. Because of pride, fools are unteachable. They know it all. You can't tell them anything. They are "wise in their own eyes"—a sure sign of folly. Badly educated ministers who are both vague and dogmatic, off-key singers who insist on contending for solo parts, children of Israel who wander forty years in the wilderness because (already then) the men were unwilling to ask for directions, pinball enthusiasts who devote ten years of their adult lives to becoming the best player in their neighborhood tavern, rejecting every inquiry about the worthwhileness of this project with the remark that the inquirer must be envious—these and other standouts from the ranks of the foolish display one of human life's most wondrous combinations: the stubborn combination of ignorance and arrogance. The foolish, as the saying goes, are often in error, but never in doubt. Moreover, when their dogmatism is challenged, they increase it. Some of them give you a piece of their mind they can hardly afford to lose.

Willfulness of this kind causes the foolish a good deal of misery and also prevents their escape from it. For to escape from a foolish line of thought or a destructive course of action, a person has to stop, admit he is wrong, turn around, head back to safe ground, and then try a new route. As C. S. Lewis once said, when we have gotten a wrong sum at the beginning of a sequence of calculations we cannot improve matters "by simply *going on*."

A proud person tries to reinvent reality. He tries to redraw the borders of human behavior to suit himself, displacing God as the Lord and boundary-keeper of life. At bottom, the proud fool is out of touch with reality. For of course our wills are not sovereign. We are not really our own centers, anchors, or lawgivers. We have not made ourselves, cannot keep ourselves, cannot ultimately oblige or forgive ourselves. The image of ourselves as center of the world is fantasy—perhaps, in its sheer detachment from reality, even a form of madness. This is especially clear at the most ominous levels of evil. Only a fool, Milton believed, would rise from his flaming ruins, look out across a "dismal Situation waste and wild," filled with "huge affliction and dismay," and declare: "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n."

Sin corrupts. Corruption spreads and kills. Hence the note of urgency, even of desperation, in many of the biblical prophecies. The prophets rebuke sin in Israel not just because it breaks God's law, but ultimately because it breaks the peace, because it breaks even the people who commit it. Israel is a nation constituted, redeemed, and regulated by the acts and covenant of God. Israel depends for its very existence on its gracious benefactor. In the prophetic view, sin against God is therefore outrageous folly: it's like pulling the plug on your own resuscitator. When Nathan accuses King David of selfish encroachment on people's lives; when Micah cries out against injustice, or Hosea against idolatry; when Isaiah warns against national pride, or Amos against phony worship, the complaint is never generic and the context never abstractly legal. The complaint is always particular (e.g., "officials and judges want to be bribed") and the context always a crisis: the nation has committed itself to jackassery. It is carrying on like a damned fool and is in danger of self-destructing.

In this role, the prophet acts as seer and wise man. He sees that in sin the stakes are higher, the reverberations wider, and the corruption deeper than people suspect. And he tells them so, often in disagreeable ways.

Because it is futile, because it is vain, because it is unrealistic, because it spoils good things, sin is a prime form of folly. And, of course, folly has its fashions. This, indeed, is one of the reasons folly is so foolish. It is just as foolish to have fashions in folly as to have them in burps or in cockroaches. Predictably, fashions in folly reflect the characteristic sins of the age—in our own case, impatience, hedonism, narcissism, flight from accountability, and the deifying of the self and its choices. "Corrupted modernity" chafes under restraint and accountability, says Thomas Oden: it displays a kind of "adolescent refusal of parenting." If we know the characteristic sins of the age, we can guess its foolish and fashionable assumptions—that morality is simply a matter of per-

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sonal taste; that all silences need to be filled up with human chatter or background music; that 760 per cent of the American people are victims; that it is better to feel than to think; that rights are more important than responsibilities; that the right to choose, even among children, supersedes all other rights; that real liberty can be enjoyed without virtue; that self-reproach is for fogies; that God is our chum, or even our gofer, whose job is to make us rich or happy or religiously excited; that it is more satisfying to be envied than respected; that it is better for a politician or a preacher to be cheerful than truthful; that Christian worship fails unless it is fun.

How do we recover from bad judgment of this kind? We have to go back to basics. A much-defeated basketball team goes back to layup and footwork drills. An out-of-shape violinist goes back to scales and arpeggios. A husband and wife who are trying to shore up their crumbling marriage may have to relearn elementary forms of courtesy to each other.

The same is true for all would-be conquerors of folly. Where unteachableness, presumption, general bad judgment, and lack of discernment are concerned, the prescription is to gain wisdom. And "the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord." Wisdom begins with awe. As C. S. Lewis knew when he characterized Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* God is good, but God is not safe. God is "good and terrible at the same time." That is why only a foolish person would describe a meeting with God as "fun."

God-fearing people have a dreadful love for God, an awe-filled love that knows God is not mocked, that we reap whatever we sow, that God is not to be fooled with, scorned, or ignored—but trusted, loved, and obeyed. Everything wise and righteous is built on this unshakable foundation. "Fear and love must go together," said John Henry Newman; "always fear, always love, to your dying day." God-fearing people know that God's first project in the world is not to make us happy, and that we will gain happiness only after we have renounced our right to it. "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." As Frederick Buechner reminds us, when Jesus says these words he is not telling us how, morally speaking, life ought to be. Rather, he is simply telling us how life is. FT

Altar Boy

You button your cassock from the bottom up
To make sure of symmetry before the Lord
And women. When they hand you sweaty coins
To save their husbands' souls, the older women
Grip your fearful wrist for a terrible instant;
Saints are squirming in their heads.
Ignore this vision.
Deposit their moist coins in the box.
Light the wooden taper from a burning candle.
Big candles for Heaven,
Small for Purgatory.
Let them tell you which candle to choose.
An old man said to me once
Big candles for horse races,
Small ones for the dogs.
He chose the dogs.
When Father motions irritably for the wine,
Ring the bells and bring the wine.
Don't forget to genuflect before the tabernacle.
Wear brown or black shoes.
If Father needs help with his alb,
Help him.

Brian Doyle

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The Modern Jewish Condition

Alan L. Mittleman

Autonomy means to live under one's own law: to discover the norms of a lawful life, a nomos, by or within oneself. Thus it is not, in principle, anarchic or anomic. Autonomy and authority are, as etymology suggests, paired concepts. Autonomy means that the self becomes its own authority, that authority per se is conditional upon the consent of the self. Autonomy takes self-directedness as its governing principle.

How does self-directedness come to have credibility as a moral concept? Its origins lie perhaps in the logic of responsibility; in the conditions under which we can attribute blame or praise to an agent. To be fully responsible, an agent must have freely chosen his course of action. The idea that we are responsible only if we can be said to have chosen or consented willingly to a course of action is certainly an old one. The great German Jewish philosopher, Hermann Cohen, attributes its discovery to the prophet Ezekiel, who, in contradiction to the exiles' belief that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," asserted that every man suffers for his own sin. Ezekiel appears to have displaced the older biblical notion that God will punish the children for the sins of their fathers for several subsequent generations. Blame and punishment are neither collective nor hereditary. They are merited by individuals on a basis of personal desert. If Cohen is correct, the concept of autonomy in the sense of having to take responsibility for one's own destiny—of having, on one's own, to recognize what is right and to act accordingly—is not new.

What is new is the idea that the discovery of what is right is an idiosyncratic self-discovery. The self, as the field and the agent of moral discovery, acquires a whole new weight. The process of the self ratifying what it has discovered, that is, of consent, takes on a new prominence. Thus what is new is the construction of the self now held to be capable of aiming at an ideal of autonomy. Autonomy as an ideal renders the relation of the autonomous self to other selves, to community, to nature, and to divinity enormously problematic. The ethics and the anthropology of the autonomous self represent a departure from prior traditions of Western thought and religion.

The theme of autonomy has been of defining significance for modernity. Indeed, the major intellectual architects of the modern project have put the individual at the crux of their thought. Modern philosophy begins with the individual. For Descartes, often held to be the first modern philosopher, reality per se is discovered in self-reflection. Being depends upon the solitary, thinking ego for its self-disclosure. The little "I," which was at best a microcosm of a vast, created (or, for Aristotle, eternal) macrocosm, now becomes the only open window onto the world of being. We cannot know, hence we cannot trust in, anything that is beyond what we can think. The little "I" has now become the arbiter of all that is.

If premodern men and women feared such radical independence, such excision from the context of an environing universe, moderns exult in it. Despite all of the modern talk of loneliness and alienation, the modern soul shrinks from attachments that are not of its own choosing. The modern soul, as Edward Shils put it, has a dread of metaphysical encumbrances. This dread is systematically expressed in the modern traditions of ethical and social thought. The newly definitive individual, stripped of constitutive attachments to primal groups and faiths, is an arbiter not only of what is but of what ought to be.

Although autonomy is not antithetical to author-

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ity per se, it is antithetical to traditional, heteronomous authority. Autonomy regards claims to authority that cannot be validated by, or in principle discovered within, the self as suspect. Traditional authority is based on claims to a superior wisdom, to divine revelation or to the accumulated and refined legacy of the ancestors. The modern ideal rejects this as so much paternalism. No prophet, philosopher-king, or historical collectivity knows better than the individual what the individual's good is. No human arrangement affecting our lives and destinies that does not rise from, or merit the consent of, the individual so affected ought to exist. Furthermore, this consent is a private matter. No one can tell us what we ought to consent to. Society should not prescribe our good for us. Only we who know ourselves best, as John Stuart Mill argued, can decide what is our special good. There are as many goods as there are persons. Autonomy implies that we are epistemic and ethical worlds unto ourselves.

Traditional authority is enfeebled by modernity because it has become increasingly difficult to speak persuasively about the good as such: the human good, the good of man qua man, the common good in which all humans share. Tradition speaks about human beings in broad, species-wide categories: for example, "It is not good for man to be alone." But what if some humans prefer solitude to sociality? Who is to say? As the postulate of a higher human nature lost ground, the good has been atomized into a near infinity of particularities. The old version of a common human nature which both Jews and Christians developed from Greek thought during the Middle Ages, namely, that man is a thinking being whose telos is found in the perfection of intellect which is also communio and imitatio dei, became incredible with the rise of modern science. The teleological universe of Aristotle was replaced by the mechanical universe of Newton. Nature was a gigantic machine, not a purposive process leading back and up into divinity. The heavens do not speak the glory of God, they speak the theorems of the calculus. Without a divinely directed, providentially purposive nature, human nature lost its human purpose. Man came to be defined increasingly by what had earlier been held to be his lower nature. As modernity progressed, it was the only nature that science could know.

The "scientization" of nature, that is, the triumph of the quantitative methods of the new physics and of the technological goal of mastery, as well as the loss of a Judeo-Christian anthropology of man as a being with a higher nature, not only atomized the concept of the good into an infinity of particularities, it also shifted the concept of the right, of *justice*, into a different framework. Formerly, justice was a matter of the conformity of human institutions and practices with an inherent natural standard: of *nomos* with *physis* where *physis* was understood to strive toward the divine. Nature, in the earlier thought, implied an immanent natural law, which linked the mundane, the transcendent, and the human. In a more theistic key, nature was the field in which divine providence engaged in shaping human destiny. While these concepts of nature are not equivalent, they share a common horizon vis-à-vis the modern one. In modernity, by contrast, talk about justice need not appeal to a transcendent norm. What is just is what the individual consents to.

Raising consent to the chief, or at least to a chief, criterion of justice shifts the framework within which we understand justice from ontology to history. Justice does not seek ontological legitimation. Appeals to the way of things or the will of God do not matter. Even worse, they signal antimodern reaction. What matters is the history of the society in which institutions of justice are found. Suttee would be intolerable for Jews and Christians, but it is more than just, one might argue, for Hindus.

Moderns (at least those quintessential moderns, the Enlightenment founders of the modern project) have tried to avoid such culture-dependent relativism by positing a universal and primitive attribute of man qua man that could replace the now enfeebled natural law: namely, rights. Human rights are held to be culturally invariant human possessions that guarantee basic claims to life, freedom, and dignity for all. Yet there is no doubt that the discourse of rights derives from the prior traditions of biblical anthropology. It is a secularized, sanitized version of *b'tselem elohim bara otam*: in the image of God He created them. Can one doubt that should this historical link between rights and biblical monotheism be lost, rights discourse will collapse as well? There is no reason to doubt this intuition: the process is already well advanced. In many quarters, foremost among them the old USSR, rights discourse was, or was thought to be, a parochial, Western, Judeo-Christian language game. One can well imagine that an Indian devoted to suttee would resent an argument opposed to the practice based on rights no less than an argument based on the Bible. Both, especially at this end of modernity, appear to be so much cultural imperialism.

It is as if there were a law of the conservation of skepticism: that which was designed to replace biblical faith becomes as vulnerable to rational assault as biblical faith. Human rights are no less jeopardized by the intellectual climate of the world that first gave them systematic articulation than they are by governments who abuse and destroy their citizens.

What we are exploring here is how weak claims of authority are in the modern context. As the case of rights shows, modern reason is not able to sustain itself. The modern project of securing a universal human dignity irrespective of tribe, clan, race, or religion founders on its own parochialism. Having abandoned a belief in significant natural right, modernity

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sought its own anthropology of rational, enlightened man. But such a man proved to be nothing but parochial. The enlightened, autonomous self was nothing more or less than a European, a Western, self. Even Germany, where the Enlightenment had originally found great advocates, by the early nineteenth century had rejected central tenets of Enlightenment as too French. Thus modern reason, having rejected the old religious absolutes, tried to innovate its own absolutes only to discover that relativity, that cultural particularity, continued to haunt them. Without belief in revelation or in natural right we seem necessarily to be thrown upon the shifting fashions of history. And history, Hegel notwithstanding, is not the history of reason. History is the struggle of wills.

The autonomous self of modernity has put will at the center. It is will, the idiosyncratic will of the autonomous self, that chooses a course of life, that decides what is good and right for itself. Yet what is it that illumines the will which chooses? The once unquestioned light of revelation grew dim. It became an *or ganuz*, a hidden light. In principle, it is a light that cannot be lost in questions, only in too certain answers. Modernity was quick to foreclose the questions and to believe that its answers, tentative as they were, were the only answers. Thus revelation could only illumine the self if the self still sensed the openness of the questions: that is, if the will, in its sublime privacy, consented to such illumination. Of course, there are always such selves, but in modernity they sense, more than ever before, their aloneness. To read great works of mysticism such as the *Cloud of Unknowing* is to hear what the aloneness of the devout was like in a "religious age." Yet there is a difference. That age at least recognized the cultural salience of the contemplative. His virtuosity, while surely not for everyone, made sense to everyone. Radical religious seriousness, while always entailing aloneness, was a publicly intelligible and valued phenomenon.

Modernity, however, was born in the retreat of revelation from the light of day, from the public world. The men and women who lived revelation—and the religious authorities that spoke in its name—became culturally solitary voices competing for a hearing at the door of modern reason. Thus the religious communities are no longer thought to be primal. They are derivative, voluntary: they derive from volition. They are not called into being by God, but by consent. Their authority, to the extent that they have any authority, is a matter of voluntary obligation. One consents to it within the framework of autonomy.

How does this consent work? For thinkers in the social contract tradition such as John Locke, community, including the communities formed in the name of revelation, arise from the decision and choice of individual humans. We band together to secure advantages that we are unable to secure by living singly. Community is no longer an organic and a priori condition of our humanness, as it was for Aristotle. Man is no longer a *zoon politikon*, a being for whom sociality is a condition of soteriology, for whom community opens onto the horizons of both virtue and transcendence—rather, he is Homo sapiens, a thinking being who arranges his life in light of his calculations of gain and loss. Community is made, not found. It is not the condition of our being, but a consequence of it. Thus, the norms of community, including the communities of revelation, bind us only insofar as we consent to them, that is, only insofar as we continue to associate our lives with them through choice.

Why should we consent to the norms of the social order that we ourselves (or at least our social contracting ancestors) have allegedly made? It seems hopelessly crude to say that we should consent to them only if in the calculation of gains and losses we stand to gain more than we stand to lose by the association. A horde of self-interested, calculating, potential nomads could never amount to a society. How does one proceed from a radical doctrine of individual autonomy to sociality, to human solidarity? Those too, at least in sanitized, rationalized form, constitute a modern ideal. An early answer to the problem of consent and the origin of normative solidarity, i.e., political obligation—Locke's answer—continued to borrow from medieval tradition. Locke did not make consent dependent on strict and arbitrary autonomy. Rather, consent is consent to what is *right*. What is right is determined by natural law. We ought to give our consent to what is right. We ought not to consent to what is wrong. Suicide, which Locke, for example, believes contravenes natural law in a fundamental way, is never something one could rightfully choose. Nor is slavery. Such consent is no consent at all. Thus Locke, writing in a religious culture in early modern times, heavily qualifies autonomy. A transcendent order of norms limits the range of moral possibilities that the will to consent may select.

As modernity progresses, however, these limitations weaken. Consent is shorn of its normative horizon and simply becomes an act of will illumined, if at all, by tastes and preferences. This possibility was glimpsed, or perhaps preached, by David Hume, who offered a radical critique of the social contract tradition. He saw in consent not a rationally informed moral act of affirmation, but a passional surrender to inherited, irrational prescriptions. Consensual affirmation of the authoritative norms of social life was a myth, an old wives' tale for those who still thought that reason governs the life of man.

Kant sought to rescue autonomy and consent from Hume's bleak vision by tying them firmly to reason. Yet for Kant, too, the authority that still resided in Locke's natural law receded. Natural law as a source of authority is replaced by an ideal of a self-sufficient, solitary individual governing himself according to formulas of reason. The lawfulness that

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we discover in the logic of our own moral self-reflection is the only authority worthy of consent. Autonomous reason is the source of its own law. If one can will a course of action—a maxim—such that all other rational agents could also will it without self-contradiction, then that maxim passes muster. Formal criteria of universality, discoverable by practical reason reflecting on the experiences of moral life, set the parameters for what is right.

Such attempts to ground or justify autonomy all return to a calculation of gains and losses. For Locke, one has more to gain by living in society than in the state of nature. For Kant, one has more to gain by living under the universal moral law, discovered by individual reason, than by living under the partial and particularistic codes imposed by an external agency. One gains freedom, which, for Kant, appears as a kind of summum bonum.

Yet, there are other versions of individual gain and advantage. The most radical version, which modernity produced as a dialectical reaction to the stress on autonomous individuality, is the nullification of individuality altogether. Modernity offers the total absorption of the individual into a collectivity, usually a society or nation-state, as a putative version of a human good. Modernity has produced leviathans more terrible than Hobbes could have imagined or approved of.

The possibility of surmounting and transcending the autonomous individuality that modernity has itself unleashed in the form of absorption in a collectivity strengthens in proportion to the decline of biblical faith. The religious communities, Jews and Christians, continued to represent a social order that claimed ontological legitimation for itself: the Church as the body of Christ, the Jews as the chosen people. With the retreat of the public legitimating function of transcendence, society represented itself to itself as a more or less immanent affair: the product of decision, choice, consent. These, as we have seen, are relatively vulnerable grounds for social order. Given the modern idea that society is made, not found, that the human world is a product of volition, not nature, the way was cleared for radical experimentation, for inventing new, rational versions of social order. As biblical understandings of transcendence retreated, rival versions of transcendence filled the vacuum. The state could become an ersatz divinity offering salvation for those who sacrifice themselves to it. The strains and terrors of modern autonomy spawned a solution that both rejects modern autonomy and derives from it. This "solution" has not yet run its course.

Jews and Christians, as representatives of forms of community far older than modernity, have not a common, but a related, task: to model a way of life, both private and public, that is demonstrably superior to both the culture of radical autonomy and to its totalitarian antithesis. To do this, Christians and Jews need to recover the essential lineaments of their archetypal communities from the mass of adaptations they have made in the course of secularization. I am unable to say precisely what this might imply for Christians, but let me conclude with what it implies for Jews.

Modern Judaism has been pulled between two poles: the confessional and the national. Judaism has been constructed as nothing-but-religion and as nothing-but-ethnicity. The nineteenth century reinvented Judaism as the "Mosaic faith" of German or American or British Jews, and deemphasized the national and ethnic elements implicit in the tradition. Zionism and other secular movements, by contrast, rejected this confessionalization of Judaism, but substituted no less modern a construction of the ethnic and national elements. Secular peoplehood is no less a distortion of traditional sacral peoplehood than is sacred religion without peoplehood at all. With the success of Zionism, secular constructions of Judaism became dominant, either marginalizing the confessional model or creating a new form of confessionalization: Jewish religion as a civil religious appendage to Jewish national identity.

For Jews to reach a new/old self-representation of their communal reality entails the rediscovery of the Jewish *polity*. Community is rather too weak a term to describe the sociality of the Jews. Jewish historical being is *both* chosen, voluntary, consensual *and* primordial, natural, and transcendent. One is born a Jew and one chooses Judaism. Judaism is found in oneself, not made. Yet one must also make one's Judaism, that is, one must make oneself into a Jew. The law precedes one, yet one must make it one's own. The massive, public otherness of the law becomes personal, intimately one's own.

The resolution of this apparent paradox has been a major concern of modern Jewish theologians. Throughout modernity, Jewish thinkers have been simultaneously drawn to and deeply agitated by Kant. Kant's stress on ethics, inner purity, and on the dignity and ennoblement of man through righteous will and action seemed like a convincing and a compatible statement of Judaism's own ideal. Yet Kant's uncompromising rejection of heteronomy seemed fully incompatible with Judaism's revealed Law. Indeed, Kant called for a "euthanasia of Judaism" (Judaism represented pure heteronomy for him) as a condition of the moral development of mankind. Thus the Kantian version of autonomy became a persistent challenge to modern Jewish thought.

The time has long since arrived for modern Jews to free themselves from the Kantian dialectic of autonomy vs. heteronomy. It is a true dialectic only if we accept its metaphysical presupposition that human beings are or ought to be radically individuated beings; that community is derivative, not primal; that self and other are mutually exclusive. Judaism (and, it would seem, Kant himself—at least the

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Kant of the *Critique of Judgment*) rejects these premises.

The primary Jewish reality is not the individual agent but the historic polity in which the individual discovers his or her Jewishness. "Polity" is stronger than "community" because it resonates with the sense of obligation that characterizes the political. It entails as well a sense of continuity, primordiality, and objectivity that community has come to lack. On the other hand, polity must not be confused with "state" or any other political category where the emphasis is on sovereignty and the monopoly of legitimate violence. Polity refers to forms of social life more binding than community yet more decentralized than the modern state.

To belong to the Jewish polity means to live in a network of duties, obligations, rights, and privileges that has worldwide range and temporal depth. The ground of this order is the covenant: a binding intimacy of a human group with God that is characterized by both love and law. Two parties chose one another. The human party must still, in every generation, choose. This stress on consent as a condition of covenantal participation, that is, of life within the polity, satisfies the modern orientation toward autonomy. On the other hand, the divine partner clearly expects that the Jew will "choose life" and ratify, in both an individual and a collective way, the terms of the covenant, not the least of which is the halakhah, the Jewish way of life. The Jew ought to consent to what is right. Consent is not directed by radical autonomy, but by a bounded autonomy. Such autonomy is conditioned by a vision of the human good that claims ontological legitimation. This vision is at once both private and public. Just as the individual stood at Sinai only as a member of the Jewish polity, so too the individual stands before Torah today. Torah is both the law of the Jewish heart and the constitution of the Jewish polity.

With appropriate qualifications, Christianity's understandings of polity bear resemblance to Judaism's. The distinctions are of crucial significance, but so are the commonalities. Jews and Christians can moderate the excesses of the modern dialectic of autonomy by modelling legitimate authority within their polities. Such authority is neither sovereign nor arbitrary. It recognizes God as the only sovereign and so circumscribes its own reach and tendency. Such authority seeks consent, but asks that consent be illumined by a persuasive ideal of the common good. Such authority speaks the language of rights but never without the correlated language of obligation. Such an authority should renew our sense of relatedness to the natural world without denigrating or distorting the uniquely human. Here, Jews and Christians, either in dialogue if they are willing, or by cultivating their own gardens if they so choose, can become a *nes amim*, a sign for the peoples, of a human life worthy of the name. FT

First Elegy

Death phoned and pretended to be my mother but I knew better
when she said she'd found a lump, it was small, I shouldn't worry,
it was very small, all the doctors felt she'd found it early,
such careful words, out of all the possible words she could utter.

And *cancer cancer* all of us hissed between our teeth
as if it were a bad smell, as if enough money
and Midwestern resolve and staunch good humor (even Death can be funny
if it's very small and you find it early) and our smorgasbord faiths

could blast that hellish smell clean out of the universe.
Of course a bad smell can kill you if it's strong enough
but this wasn't, we knew it, and we were willing to live on *if*.
It would just be extremely unpleasant for mother and of course for us.

And while we sighed *cancer* and kept a quivering upper lip
the lump was lifted under the knife, the wound had healed,
she could raise her arm to fix her hair, her veins were filled
every three weeks with tender poison *drip drip drip*

and mother learned the Achy Breaky and resumed her golf.
We had barred all the doors to Death, so Death came in the window,
bit through her heart in a moment, she was that easy to undo.
It was no big deal to Death, so nonchalant, sure of itself,

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it knew lots of ways to do it, clever mongrel puppy
worrying a rag, one eye on us, but the rag was mother,
she's ruined now, we cannot press her back together,
and our displeasure makes no difference. Death is happy.

Where we had sucked *cancer cancer* through our teeth before
now we outraged *But she had no history, it's such a shock,*
it's so surprising, we looked the wrong way, it's a dirty joke,
she did all the right things, SHE HAD NO HISTORY, THIS IS NOT FAIR

as if some other game with Death would have pleased us better.
And anyway it was a lie, what we said to each other was a lie.
Mother did and we do all have a long, long history,
my relatives have all caught Death, sooner or later,

it's in our chromosomes, it runs in the family.
Her friends who had never met me think I resemble mother,
they flinched above their casseroles when I opened the door,
but was it her blue eyes they saw, or her Death upon me?

We have joined the ranks of those not children any longer
who flounder, suddenly irresolute and full of worry,
who let the details slide a little, how long I can't be sure.
What I am sure of is that my mother would be stronger.

And we wonder if she mourns us now as we mourn her
(not that we want her to suffer like this), and if she knows
finally, perfectly, love and forgiveness left unshown.
To be blunt, yes, we're looking for some easy answers.

And this sounds melodramatic and more than a little morbid
but it's the hard truth, we resent what happened to her body,
resurrection or not, to the sudden end it was lithe and healthy,
we want it back joking, *that* was mother, not God forbid

this gray unnatural being in mother's clothes we've found.
We try without success to forget how it must have hurt,
that moment when Death decided, pounced on her stubborn heart,
and now we close her in a box, put her into the ground.

Things were done and left undone, there is no health in us,
we swear we'll spend more time on the things that really matter,
but we'll drift, we'll find our way again, grow sad, grow bitter,
learn in spite of ourselves our history and prognosis.

And though we believe she was rescued, carried home by God
where she still devises luncheons and learns the new line dances,
and though it's she who wove the tight fabric of our existence,
taught us to be particular, polite, and unafraid,

she's gone, she was here and then gone, and we seem to keep forgetting,
she can't mix us an old-fashioned, or buy us a perfect present,
what we had is all we have, what we thought was forever isn't,
we phone each other often, but Death is always on call-waiting.

Jane Greer

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Judge Not?

Jean Bethke Elshtain

We are a society awash in exculpatory strategies. We've devised lots of fascinating ways to let ourselves or others off the hook: all one need do is think of recent, well-publicized trials to appreciate the truth of this. We Americans are at present being bombarded with sensationalistic tales of victimization and equally sensationalistic proclamations of immunity from responsibility. Alternately bemused and troubled by the Oprah Winfreyization of American life, I sometimes think of my grandmother.

Dear Grandma (may she rest in peace) knew how to judge. She was tough as nails on people she found despicable or merely wanting. She chewed them out in her low German dialect (being a Volga German, *hochdeutsch* was not her tongue), and we grandchildren could figure out a thing or two. We knew when she was describing someone as "swinish" or "dirty," these being ways to characterize those who stole from others, beat their wives or their livestock, or abused their children. (Women, of course, could be abusers, too.) We missed a good bit of her assessments, though, as it was the policy of my grandmother, my mother, and Aunts Mary and Martha not to teach us *plattdeutsch*. When Grandma was really on a roll and wanted nothing less than to condemn someone to perdition, her favorite judging word was "Russki." Hearing it sent a frisson through our tender flesh and bones. The last time I heard her say this I was forty-three or forty-four years old and it still frightened me, not quite out of my wits, but I remained convinced, as I had been since the age of five or six when I had acquired some inkling of what was at stake, that that person was doomed, no two ways about it.

"Russki" was her shorthand judgment on the garden-variety cheat, the ordinary bum, the farmer who shortchanged his hired hands, or the mother who kept her kids in dirty clothes, let their noses run, and never washed their hair. Why "Russki" as a term of judgment? That was historic overdetermination. It was the Russians who had begun to undermine the historic immunities of the Volga German communities. Under Tsar Nicholas, on the throne when my grandparents' families emigrated to the New Country from what my grandmother always called the Old Country, their sons were being drafted into the Russian Army; and they were so fearful that they hid their Bibles (Luther's German translation) in secret places.

I suppose my grandmother would be a good candidate for sensitivity training. She is beyond the reach of the enthusiasts of pop psychology with its quivering "non-judgmentalism," having died at the age of ninety-four two years ago, but it gives me a shiver of another sort (one of delight) to imagine a confrontation between Grandma and a "facilitator," eyes agleam with programmed goodness, saying things like, "Now, Mrs. Lind, *why* do you feel that way?" Or: "Don't you think that's a little harsh? Have you considered how hurtful such words can be?" Probably the facilitator would want to take a good look at my mother, and, in addition to Aunts Mary and Martha, Uncle Bill and Uncle Ted, too, no doubt damaged beyond repair, having been reared by such a no-nonsense judger. Good luck! I doubt they would have the slightest inkling of what she was going on about. There was no room in the family idiom for evasions of responsibility and you would find yourself the subject of an assessment of a rather decisive sort if you tried one.

No doubt from time to time my grandmother and her children rushed to judgment. I know my sisters

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and brothers and I sometimes wished Mom wouldn't embarrass us in public by being so, well, *decisive* in her assessment of things—more than once delivered up in front of those being assessed, too. I recall wanting to seek the nearest exit on more than once occasion. But then I thought, even at the time, better this than someone agreeable and eternally smiling, like my nemesis, the mother of Judy Belcher (not her real name), who was a "pal" to her daughter. They "talked about everything," especially "boyfriends" and "fashion," and they liked to "have fun together." I found this pretty disgusting. I still do. Judging seems to run in the family.

But to say this is not to say much. For what is at stake is the capacity to make judgments as an ethical issue of the gravest sort, and along with it, the discernment of what it means to judge well. In other words, we need a clear sense of why judging is important and what is involved in the activity of judging, and we need a way to distinguish between rash judging—not judging well—and the kind of judging that lies at the heart of what it means to be a self-respecting human subject in a community of other equally self-respecting subjects.

Judging has been in bad odor for quite some time in American culture. It is equated with being punitive, or with insensitivity, or with various "phobias" and "isms." It is the mark of antiquated ways of thinking, feeling, and willing. Better, no doubt, to be something called "open-minded," a trait thought to be characteristic of sensitive and supportive persons. A young woman well known to me reports that she and her fellow teachers at one of the elite New York public high schools were enjoined not to make students "feel bad" by being too decisive in their assessments of student work and effort. I breathed a sigh of recognition when she told me this; it is the sort of thing one hears in the higher reaches of the academy, too. In fact, this attitude is everywhere, even on bumper stickers. At least some of the readers of this essay will have sighted a bumper sticker that reads: "A Mind Is Like a Parachute. It Works Best When It Is Open." Yes, indeed, one wants to counter, the more open—meaning the more porous and thin—the better. A rather more convenient way of being in the world than being called upon to discriminate in the old—best—sense of the word. An open mind of the sort celebrated by the bumper sticker may signify an empty head, a person incapable of those acts of discernment we call "judging," one who is, in fact, driven to see in such acts mere prejudice.

But prejudice and judgment are two very different human possibilities; indeed, the more we proliferate prejudices, free from the scrutiny of that discernment we aim to evade, the less capable we are, over time, of making judgments. An example or two, in line with Kant's insistence that "Examples are the go-cart of judgments," may suffice. When I first began university teaching, in 1973, I taught a course called "Feminist Politics and Theory." I taught it for several years until I decided the tumult was too much to put up with semester after semester. One problem I encountered went like this. I had designed the course as a sustained exercise in assessing, and critically contrasting, competing feminist accounts of culture and politics. I asked my students to engage certain questions that presupposed their capacity for judgment: What sort of picture of the human condition is presented by this theorist? Could her prescription for change be implemented? How? What would the world look like if it were? And so on. But I ran into trouble straight-off for, in the eyes of many of my students, what I was supposed to be doing was condemning that big booming abstraction, Patriarchy, for fifty minutes three times a week. I was supposed to embrace, not criticize, feminist doctrines—all of them—even though the ideas of the radical separatist feminists scarcely comported with those of liberal feminists on many issues. Needless to say, the Marxist feminists and the eco-feminists didn't see eye-to-eye on lots of things either.

Students sometimes showed up in my office bereft and troubled. One told me she had been a feminist since she was fourteen and didn't need to hear feminism criticized. Another told me she was so "upset" by my criticism of the text of a feminist who proposed test-tube reproduction and a world run by beneficent cyber-engineers, and so "shocked" at my insistence that she respond to a series of questions asking her to sift, discriminate, and assess this text and others, that she had complained to, and sought refuge in, a support group at the women's center. Yet another refused to write a paper contrasting Freud's essays on female development with what the psychoanalytic feminists were doing with Freud because "Freud was a cancer-ridden, cigar-smoking misogynist." This expression of prejudice was not an authentic moment of judging, of course, not least because the student had refused to read the assigned texts. She was repeating a prejudice, not forming a judgment.

A teacher quickly wearies of this sort of thing because it undermines the presuppositions that guide and help to constitute the pedagogical enterprise, one of the most important of these suppositions being that students are capable of weighing alternatives with a generosity of spirit and quality of discernment that makes their subsequent judgments at least plausible if not unassailable. I have always been fond of a pithy sentence in a letter Freud wrote to his fiancée, Martha: "A human being must be able to pull himself together to form a judgment, otherwise he turns into what we Viennese call a *guten Potschen* [doormat]." Apart from being stepped on, what is the problem with persons as doormats? Precisely this: they have sloughed off that which is theirs to do—to

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enter a community of judging, meaning that one can see error and try to put it right, one can distinguish the more from the less important, one can appropriately name phenomena and act accordingly. As an example of the latter, think of the distinction to be marked between "misfortune" and an "injustice" and what we are enjoined to do whether we confront one or the other. Now Freud was not urging Martha to be cruel or incapable of compassion or forgiveness; rather, he was urging her to stiffen her spine a bit, to stand up for herself, and not to shrink from acts of assessment and discernment.

Judging involves calling things by their real names, embracing the difficult recognition that what Hannah Arendt called "an enormously enlarged empathy" does not in itself suffice to sustain the capacity for that critical thinking we call judging. Arendt had little use for those who treated adults as if they were children by spoon-feeding them palatable "truths" rather than the harder truths of life and politics. If we over-assimilate our situation to that of others, and pretend that we are "at one" with them, we may lose the point at which we leave off and they begin. We are then in danger of losing the faculty of judgment that, for Arendt, consists in "thinking the particular" and through this concrete act reaching for more general conclusions and truths.

Why is judging—what Arendt called the preeminent political faculty—at a nadir among us? Surely much of the explanation lies in the triumph of the ideology of victimization coupled with self-esteem mania. The two are, of course, closely linked. Examples are so numerous it is hard to pick and choose. Take one from the public schools. By now most discerning citizens are familiar with the study showing that American schoolchildren scored much lower on math accomplishment tests than did their counterparts from several other societies—even while these same Americans were the ones who "felt best" about their math ability. Here the emphasis on "feeling good" by contrast to concrete accomplishment results in students being incapable of an accurate discernment of where they really stand on their math ability. Here is a second story, this from the literary front. My son is an aspiring poet and he finds increasingly depressing the many moments, whether in class or out, when a poem that is weak in execution and flat in evocative power is embraced as something "real" and important because it speaks about the poet's own undigested experiences, which by definition can never be assessed and criticized. In other words, the self-referential prejudices of our time swamp a cooler set of criticisms and judgments, and wind up making a triumph of something rather petty. In the process, the work of those young men and women who really struggle with form and language and getting it right is trivialized, their accomplishments discounted. In some circles, if you carefully and precisely criticize a weak poem, you may face censure because the poem and its author's psyche or identity are at one; thus, you find yourself in the position of criticizing her (or his) life, given the utter collapse of one into the other, when what you really want to do is to explain why you think this isn't a very good poem.

The culture of victimization, then, and the triumph of pop-psych notions of "self-esteem," in contrast to a self capable of discernment and judging well, seems a pretty clear source of our discontents in this matter. Of course, any decent person is concerned about victims, and there are *real* victims in our less than perfect world. But that is not the issue. An ideology of victimization (of the feminist sort) casts women as victims of male oppression from the very beginning of time; indeed, female victimization has taken on foundational status. But this victim ideology diverts attention from concrete and specific instances of female victimization in favor of pushing a relentless worldview structured around such dichotomies as victim/victimizer, guilty/innocent, tainted/pure. The female victim, construed as innocent, remains somehow free from sin. Remember Arendt's insistence, following Kant, that judging "is the faculty of thinking the particular." An ideology of victimization—with its harsh and exaggerated polemicism—actually hurts the cause of women's rights, for it provides grounds for callous or sexist individuals to deprecate the claims of actual victims.

Victimization ideology is little more than a politics of resentment, given the growing body of evidence demonstrating that women, though they often have been victims of injustice, have played a variety of active roles throughout history and in every culture. Of course, who didn't know that? It is quite incredible that one must make this point against those who, in the name of feminism, promote the generic prejudice that women are victims *simpliciter*. Our world is filled with noisy forces urging us to refrain from judging precisely in the name of justice. This dangerous nonsense is in evidence in every issue of any daily newspaper anywhere. The jurors in the Reginald Denny beating case decided not to convict because the thugs who smashed a man's face to an unrecognizable pulp and exulted for the cameras as if they had just made the winning touchdown at a Superbowl Game were in the grip of a "mob psychology" and could not, therefore, be judged for their specific acts of wanton, and repeated, violence. The Menendez brothers were "victims" who, although they blasted their parents numerous times with a shotgun, were not to be held accountable. We cannot judge them given what they "went through," as one juror put it.

Take another case, one worth looking at in some detail. A woman in Nashville, Tennessee, starved her infant son to death. Turned into a robot, so it was

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claimed, she was unable to feed the infant even though the husband was away at work all day. Her defense was based on her having been abused by this husband even though when he got home from work, the two of them would dress up and go out on the town, frequenting sleazy bars, looking for men and women for three-way sex. Meanwhile, a baby is starving to death. Of this terrible story, victimization doctrine holds that as a victim of abuse herself, the woman, by definition, could not in turn be victimizing another. We cannot judge her actions because she is oppressed. According to her lawyers, who are now mounting an appeal, the jury that found her guilty has victimized her twice. But one who looks at victimization as a concrete and specific act would argue that, although it is terrible to be abused, for a twenty-three-year old woman with a range of options open to her (she might have given the infant to her mother to care for, as she had done with an older child) to starve an infant to death is more terrible yet. Surely, to make that assessment is not an act prompted by a harsh desire for revenge. It flows, rather, from a recognition that we are able to distinguish real victims from rhetorical ones, evil acts and crimes from less serious misdeeds.

As the lawyers for this woman said, the woman cannot be "held accountable," and to do so is a "male deal . . . or a society deal, but some people just don't get it." Now, we are told, the perpetrator is a victim twice or even thrice—of that amorphous entity, society, of her husband, and of the jury that found her guilty. The woman's mother has stepped in, proclaiming that she, too, is a "victim" for she "lost a grandson." Notice the language: she "lost" the grandson, as if he had been misplaced, not knowingly, over a six-week period, starved to death as he lay, immobile, listless, no longer able to cry, in his own waste in a filthy crib in a locked room as his parents played out their fantasies with male and female prostitutes. This is nigh unbelievable, but there it is. Even if this awful case gets turned back on appeal, we—all of us—are in danger of being worn down by arguments of this sort; hence, the more likely it is that, at some future point, we will have forgotten what it means to hold *this* person accountable in *this* situation for *this* particular horrible deed.

Let's pursue this just a bit further, depressing as it is, because the elimination of the possibility of judgment, the evacuation of the very capacity of judging, would spell the end of the human subject as a self-respecting, accountable being. Judging is a sign, a mark, of our respect for the dignity of others and ourselves. We are surrounded by various strategies of exculpation—ways to evade responsibility for a situation or an outcome should one happen to be a member of an "oppressed" or "victimized" group. In a recent book, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, the author, Patricia Williams, plays the victim card to achieve both ends simultaneously. Acknowledging that the Tawana Brawley accusations in the now-notorious 1988 scandal were part of a hoax, Williams suggests that that doesn't really matter. For Brawley was a victim of "some unspeakable crime." "No matter how she got there. No matter who did it to her—and even if she did it to herself." That is, even if Brawley injured herself, "her condition was clearly the expression of some crime against her, some tremendous violence, some great violation that challenges comprehension." Brawley was the victim of a "meta-rape," and this secures both her victim status and legitimates the power plays of those who cynically manipulated the situation. These latter escape judgment; and Brawley cannot be judged either. But the "society" that somehow "did" this to her on a "meta" level becomes responsible given the prejudice that in a "racist" society all African Americans are victims of the dominant "metanarrative." Consider the alternative view of black possibility and responsibility noted by Stephen Carter:

> We must never lose the capacity for judgment, especially the capacity to judge ourselves and our people. . . . Standards of morality matter no less than standards of excellence. There are black people who commit heinous crimes, and not all of them are driven by hunger and neglect. . . . We are not automatons. To understand all may indeed be to forgive all, but no civilization can survive when the capacity for understanding is allowed to supersede the capacity for judgment. Otherwise, at the end of the line lies a pile of garbage: Hitler wasn't evil, just insane.

"When the capacity for understanding is allowed to supersede the capacity for judgment"—let the words linger for a moment. Then conjure with the teaching of Jesus: "Judge not that ye be not judged," this, of course, from the Sermon on the Mount. These, too, are words I grew up with. And I pondered them, wondering if my mother's "judgmental" attitude was compatible with Jesus' injunction. We were also told: "There but for the grace of God go I." We were told to "walk around in the other guy's shoes" before we judged severely or before we judged at all. Squaring this with Grandma's dismissive "Russki" was no easy matter. I sometimes repaired to Lincoln, one of my childhood heroes. I especially loved the magnificent Second Inaugural, "With malice toward none, with charity for all . . ." Those words I could square with judgment. Malice and judgment; the punitive and the fair are not the same. Lincoln had, after all, insisted that the nations were under God's judgment, and our terrible Civil War, the war he was prosecuting in terms of "unconditional surrender," was our punishment for chattel slavery. Lincoln was no value-free, laid-back kind of guy: compassion with judgment,

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this framed his life and work. "Judge not" is, then, not an injunction to spineless acceptance but a caution against peremptory legalisms that leave no space for acts of compassion and witness.

I have also found helpful the discussion of the lively British philosopher, Mary Midgley. In her book *Can't We Make Moral Judgments?* Midgley notes our contemporary search for a nonjudgmental politics and quotes all those people who cry, in effect, "But surely it's always wrong to make moral judgments." We are not permitted to make anyone uncomfortable, to be "insensitive." Yet moral judgment of "some kind," says Midgley, "is a necessary element to our thinking." Judging involves our whole nature—it isn't just icing on the cake of self-identity. Judging makes it possible for us to "find our way through a whole forest of possibilities."

Midgley argues that Jesus was taking aim at sweeping condemnations and vindictiveness: he was not trashing the "whole faculty of judgment." Indeed, Jesus is making the "subtle point that while we cannot possibly avoid judging, we can see to it that we judge fairly, as we would expect others to do to us." This is part and parcel, then, of justice as fairness, as a discernment about a particular case and person and deed. Subjectivism in such matters—of the "I'm okay, you're okay," variety—is a cop-out, a way to stop forming and expressing moral judgments altogether. This strange suspension of specific moments of judgment goes hand-in-glove, of course, with an often violent rhetoric of condemnation of whole categories of persons, past and present—that all-purpose villain, the Dead White European Male, comes to mind.

Perhaps this is the point at which we might recall Tocqueville's warnings about "What Sort of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear," for Tocqueville's worst-case scenario has quite a bit to do with judging or, better put, no longer being able to distinguish the better from the worse, the excellent from the mediocre, slavishness from self-responsibility. Democratic despotism, according to Tocqueville, would have a "different character" from the tyranny of the Old World. "It would be more widespread and milder; it would degrade men rather than torment them." Thus, Tocqueville sees citizens withdrawing into themselves, circling around one another in pursuit of "the petty and banal pleasures with which they glut their souls." The exercise of genuine free choice becomes rarer, the activity of free will occurs "within a narrower compass, and little by little robs each citizen of the proper use of his own faculties." The words Tocqueville uses to describe this state of things are "hinder . . . restrain . . . enervate . . . stultify." Losing over time the "faculty of thinking, feeling, and acting for themselves," these citizens "slowly fall below the level of humanity." Tocqueville nowhere talks about collapse of the faculty of judgment in a specific sense but that, surely, is much of what is at stake. Judging is central to, indeed constitutive of, both our self-identity *and* our sociality: it helps us to disentangle, analyze, separate, discern and, in so doing, puts us smack dab in a world of others—not apart, not above, not below, but *among*.

Told that, if we are "powerful" we cannot judge others but can only be judged, and on the other hand that if we are "powerless" we can judge totally but cannot be judged—since the "powerful" by definition "don't get it"—we fall into an intellectual laziness that is itself ethically corrupt and corrupting. As Midgley notes, Jesus' message was: do not stone people, do not cast them out, do not write them off. His target was punitive self-righteousness. With such self-righteousness now a major cottage industry, are we in the danger zone imagined by Tocqueville? That is the question to which sober reflection on judging leads us—or at least where it should. FT

". . . a consuming fire"

How your love burns us
down and down, burns us
down like candles.

How your holy flame
eats our wicks, licks
and swallows our yellow wax,

consumes us to brighten
and perfume the room.
How the fire follows

our threads, hungrily
devours our tallow,
burrows down through

the hearts of us
to the final flicker
into thin air, when a thin,

curling filament of smoke
flowers, from our charred
stumps, like incense.

Luci Shaw

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Jungians and Gnostics

Jeffrey Burke Satinover

Heresies perish not with their authors, but like the river Arethusa, though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another.
—Thomas Brown, *Religio Medici*

Modernism is the synthesis of all heresies.
—Pope Pius VI

When I was young, time took forever to pass. I remember that in March, a summer vacation due to start in June seemed agonizingly far off. Somewhat later, as I began to learn about history, ancient times seemed so remote as to be mere abstractions, with no possible import for the present or for me.

But now I'm past the midpoint of a lifetime, and it seems awfully short. Twenty or thirty of these mayfly-like passages are not much at all: more graspable to me now, shorter, it seems, than the three months of anticipation that led up to those impossibly far-off school vacations. Thirty lifetimes put us back to the Roman Empire—and suddenly, it's not an abstraction at all. Why, it's no more distant than Grandma or Grandpa seemed just a little while ago. And the Renaissance? That was yesterday: I can feel myself breathing its very air.

It often happens in psychotherapy that, one day, our patient realizes that he has long carried about a pet self-definition, an unexamined shibboleth about himself that he has tacitly accepted as true, but which in fact is not. For instance, he has always thought of himself as uncommonly clever, or kind, or mature. Often, too, the moment in which he realizes the falseness of this shibboleth—that high as his I.Q. may be, it is matched or exceeded by millions of others'; that his helpfulness is often a means of control; that his maturity is most often suffered by others as rigidity—is the first moment he realizes its existence at all, even when it has, for many years, quietly infiltrated all he has said and done.

As it is with individuals, so it is with cultures, and our own great cultural shibboleth—with us since the Renaissance—is the myth of progress. It is our inability to grasp how short a time has truly passed, how much the story of our civilization is but a single story, how brief and intimately superimposed are but a mere handful of lifetimes, that fosters this illusion that we are so different from—nay, better than—our ancestors.

Of course, in many respects progress has been and is being made. But if we examine ourselves carefully, we will have to agree that the great areas of progress lie in the domain of *technology*, broadly defined. Consider psychiatry: measurable, quantifiable, obvious progress has been made in our understanding of the brain, its gross anatomy, fine anatomy, cellular structure, and biochemical processes, and in how these relate to behavior, thought, and emotion. This understanding has allowed for increasingly precise interventions (one parameter of progress) that more frequently yield desired results (a second parameter of progress) with increasing predictability (yet another parameter of progress).

These standards come from the world of science, whose proper domain of cultivation is the natural world (whether within or without our skulls) and whose proper harvest is improved technology. But when we consider our culture as having "made progress," tacitly we mean far more than mere technological advance. Quite without thinking, we presume progress in other dimensions as well: that we have progressed "as people"; that we are "better," in some sense, than our forebears; "healthier" not just in the sense of less subject to, say, bacteria, but having acquired a superior mental hygienics; that our way of understanding the world—our Weltanschauung—

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has also progressed; that we are, in fact, in some but dimly sensed way, *morally* superior to those who came before us. That is, after all, how we justify major changes in mores and social policy, and why so often we refer to these changes in all sincerity—even though they more often than not prove disastrous—as "progressive."

But, of course, just as with our psychotherapy patient who has had his "ah ha" experience, no sooner do we put these thoughts into words than their conceit becomes embarrassingly apparent to us. While we indeed may have progressed in certain limited ways, it is not at all clear that we have progressed in those large ways that really are our main concern. For example, what evidence is there that modern man is morally superior to premodern man? Does not the bloody history of the twentieth century suggest the reverse?

But is there, perhaps, evidence that, at least under a more limited conception of "progress," modern *psychological* man is *mentally* healthier than premodern pre-psychological man? In the halcyon days of psychoanalysis, analysts unabashedly urged everyone to be analyzed, for this would certainly usher in a better world. Such claims have long since ceased, thank goodness, although one still blushes to think how recent such proposals were, at once both self-serving and utopian.

After nearly ninety years, there is nothing to suggest that modern, psychological man is happier, or more serene, or more farseeing, or more generous toward his fellows than his predecessors. A more realistic view would be to acknowledge only that a number of our techniques yield documentable improvement in a limited number of discrete, identifiable illnesses. Nor does the society dominated by the idea of psychological man give evidence of having progressed because of psychological influences; its many, obvious, and swiftly increasing problems might tempt one, if anything, to argue the opposite.

I

Nonetheless, ideas—and whole worldviews, for that matter—do change, and directly and indirectly the society, composed of men who are both the passive carriers of those ideas and the active agents of influence, changes as well. We, the proponents and carriers of change, simply presume that such change constitutes progress—at least until we look back ruefully to consider the results.

For example, many years ago, a whole chorus of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers asserted with one voice that in cases of divorce, sole custody was in the best interests of the child. This expert opinion made its way over time into the courts, and became the de facto law of the land. Now there has arisen a different body of experts propounding the exact opposite: that in cases of divorce, joint custody is in the best interests of the child, and this opposite "fact" is now quickly becoming the new de facto law. Is this progress? Or is it perhaps merely fashion, no different, really, from the herd of shoppers flocking de rigueur this year to mauve, that year to burnt umber?

This question is not even asked, let alone rigorously defined, researched, and answered. In fact, from a scientific perspective, the definition in this instance of "best interest" may amount to nothing more than opinions about values or ethics, in which case the desired answer can be dictated a priori.

Similarly, for many years the common (lay) consensus, based on experience, held that divorce was on balance a pretty bad thing, and that marriages should remain intact at almost any cost. Then arose an army of psychological "experts" who on the basis not of their experience but of their expertise declaimed that children were far more severely harmed by unhappy parents who stayed together than they were by divorce. Now that the results in all areas of life of our exploding divorce rate have become too devastating to be ignored (that is, now that what we already knew from "soft" but painful experience has been confirmed by painless but "hard" research), we learn that the results of divorce are after all worse—just as we used to think in that antediluvian era before modern "progress."

Once we realize that the presumption of progress, at least in certain important areas, is a myth, and how, in fact, mere fashion most often dictates the specifics of our presumptions, we begin also to realize how fickle we really are. And once we begin to acknowledge this disconcerting fact, it becomes apparent that within the span of at most a few generations—and often more rapidly than that—a limited set of ideas is likely to be turned over, repackaged (in whatever constitutes the new idiom), and resold as new thinking.

II

Of all the fathers of modern psychology, C. G. Jung is most widely known for his recognition and approval of what he loosely termed a "religious instinct" in man: a persistent longing for meaning and purpose that gave rise not only to theology, but to much of art, literature, and mythology as well. In contrast to Sigmund Freud, his one-time mentor, Jung was convinced not only that human psychology was dominated by this "instinct"—Freud himself acknowledged this much, but he lamented the fact as evidence of mankind's regrettable clinging to infantilism—but that the longing for meaning was unique and native to man, not neurotic, and not reducible. He never accepted Freud's insistence that this longing could be psychoanalyzed out of existence, and ultimately the two pioneers of depth psychology (Jung had been selected by Freud as his "prince and heir")

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parted company over this point. Indeed, Jung saw the conundrum implicit in, and fiercely fought, the larger proposition tacitly behind the entire psychoanalytic venture, namely, that in the mode of all scientific analysis, the entirety of human motivation could be reduced, ultimately, to prior, finally material, causes.

But being as well very much a child of the emerging, post-Christian, enlightened European world—and therefore driven to define himself as a "scientist"—Jung set about to synthesize, within his vision of human nature, science and religion: that is, instinct and spirit.

Given the twenty remarkably erudite volumes of his collected works, it may seem surprising that Jung's synthesis can nonetheless be described rather simply: the essential elements that compose human nature—the instincts in particular—themselves each have a spiritual dimension.

"The archetypes," states Jung, "are the images of the instincts." Archetypes are the mythological figures that serve as the universal "cores" around which personal complexes constellate. Their universality gives human psychology its relatively invariant character across time and culture. Jung notes that the archetypes have a personality-like structure (one-dimensional and stereotyped though they may be, like the allegorical characters in a Dickens novel, or the "alters" in Multiple Personality Disorder, or the gods and goddesses of Greek and other mythologies) including each its own consciousness, set of values, and goals. He identifies them with, for example, the "spirits" that spoke to his cousin, a medium, while in trance.

This conception could be seen as but an alternative form of Freud-style reductionism: that is, if "spirits" are merely subjectively apperceived parts of the self projected onto some nonexistent metaphysical "screen" where they are mistaken as "other," then religion, or at least a spiritism that claims access to some "other realm," becomes, once again, merely an illusion.

However, Jung also attributes to the archetypes a transcendent dimension, a capacity to evade the constraints of material causality (as in extrasensory phenomena, astrological correspondences, or so-called "synchronicity"—seemingly meaningful coincidences). Once this dimension is added, the archetypes become indistinguishable from spirits or demons as traditionally conceived, regardless of the scientific sound of words like "complexes," "synchronicity," or, indeed, "archetypes." Archetypes are immaterial, yet beings; each has an individual consciousness and intentionality, yet possesses a commonly shared and universal consciousness of some sort; they can transmit to people information not obtainable by natural means, and yet in some crucial way are linked to (and hence rousable by) the basic animal drives of human nature.

The classical, reductionistic psychoanalytic worldview, because it undermines belief in spirit, inadvertently nudges men in the direction of worshipping the instincts—e.g., if not God, then we shall worship pleasure, each his favorite—all the while deluding itself that it has helped men to outgrow worship altogether. Jung saw this. He was convinced that, simply put, Freud's god was Eros (just as it is for so many others). But though recognizing it for what it was, Jung did not reject this inevitable outcome of depth psychology. On the contrary, he embraced it even more fully (and in a certain sense, more honestly), carrying the psychoanalytic venture to its natural conclusion. If psychoanalysis has forced us to worship the instincts unwittingly, says Jung, why then, worship them we shall, only deliberately, with the added illumination that these are not merely instincts we are worshipping, they are gods as well. In the spirit of Renaissance Neoplatonism and magic, says Jung, every spirit above has its reflection below in the world of matter, with man's imagination (soul) the carrier in which above and below intersect. (This union of spirit and matter, above and below, dovetails neatly with the mystic union of macrocosm and microcosm also proposed by Neoplatonists and occultists and reincarnated in the union of science and religion.) To discover the god to whom one belongs, to embrace him—or her!—fully, to discover and not resist the fate he has laid out for you, is to know meaning and purpose in life. In Joseph Campbell's modern updating of the world's very first self-help admonition (Genesis 3:4-5), "Follow your bliss."

In the materialistic psychologies that derive from or are cognate to Freud's, the worship of instinct is only implicit—they are what we have left after all higher meaning has been shown to be illusion; in the spiritualistic psychologies that derive from or are cognate to Jung's, the worship of instinct is explicit. Yet both derive from the same Renaissance matrix of science and magic. Their similarities, at heart, are far greater than their surface differences. Both are modern manifestations of a resurgent ancient way of life. For more significantly than a mere rebirth of classicism (that being only its artistic dimension), the Renaissance was a rebirth of *paganism*.

III

Ethical monotheism was introduced into the pagan culture of the ancient Near East by a single people, the Jews. The phrase "ethical monotheism" conveys two essential points concerning Judaism as a religion. First, that there is only one God, and since there is only one God, He is therefore the God of all people; second, that the central concern of this God, and therefore of His people, is ethics.

By the time of Christ, close to 10 percent of the Roman Empire was Jewish. Judaism had spread to pagan sites outside of what was once Canaan in the aftermath of the seventy-year exile of the Israelites to

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Babylonia, from which most did not return. Still, ethical monotheism remained the guiding worldview of but a single people, the Jews. It was a national, or quasi-national, religion and remains somewhat so even to this day.

The ultimate spread of ethical monotheism to the pagan world, then, occurred not via Judaism but via Christianity. From a certain perspective, we might say "via the Christian variant of Judaism." (As Franz Rosenzweig, an eminent Jewish man of letters who almost converted to Christianity, put it—in a way that is perhaps not terribly flattering to Christians—"Christianity is Judaism for the Gentiles.") It was this ethical monotheism in its Christian form that toppled so many pagan dominions with such astonishing force and speed, and established a moral order that reigned so vigorously until the Renaissance. Progressively weaker emanations of this ethical monotheism have continued to illumine our own outlook up to the present, when we in the West seem to be experiencing their final fade-out.

What are the essentials of the paganism that ethical monotheism replaced, and that is now, in turn, replacing it? First, of course, paganism is polytheistic. Each individual (or in more primitive, homogeneous societies, each group) feels himself subject to his own god or goddess. At a practical level, this means that the distinctive values, standards, goals, and laws of each deity govern the lives of that deity's worshippers. Thus pagan society is polyvalent: a single moral standard does not govern the lives of men, and except by *force majeure*, no god, and no corresponding set of human values, is superior to any other. And, as a consequence, pagan societies tend to become inegalitarian. For different standards for different groups is something that inevitably leads to factional competition; and in time *force majeure* indeed becomes the rule—might soon comes to make right. Zeus rules because he is strongest, and for no other reason; he is certainly not the wisest.

As we know, pagan society is pantheistic or animistic: gods and goddesses inhabit the natural world and are one with it; nature itself is worshipped as divine; there is no serious distinction between creature and creator. Again, on a practical level, this means that men worship not only the nature "out there," they also worship their own nature, which is to say, their instincts: e.g., hunger, sex, and aggression, and more generally, pleasure. In thus spiritualizing the instincts, pagan worship therefore tends naturally to the violent, the hedonistic, and the orgiastic. Pagan religious ritual arouses the instincts, especially sexuality and aggression, to the keenest possible pitch. In the subsequent gratification of these instincts, the greatest possible pleasure and hence also the highest level of religious ecstasy is meant to be achieved. Violent intoxication, temple prostitution, the ritual slaughter of enemies, self-mutilation, even child sacrifice: all these historical phenomena can be understood not as pathological, but as predictable end-points to the unfettering of human nature. Not recognizing how thin and easily cracked is our present veneer of Judeo-Christian culture, we tend loftily to think of such practices as ancient and utterly alien. (We have, after all, "progressed" beyond them.) But we need only look to television, or to the current literature of child abuse, or a few years back to the Holocaust to understand how entirely unexceptional they are.

Finally, in all of this, paganism is idolatrous, which is an archaic word for humanistic. Pagans take that which is simply found within their own human nature; and taking what is as the measure of what is good, they represent it to themselves and make of it a god: man as the measure of all things. This is, perhaps, a different take on the concept of humanism than we are accustomed to; we tend to think of it, in a spirit of kindliness, as but a form of the humane. And yet we should remember that the most enormous slaughters in recent history have poured their victims' blood out onto explicitly humanistic soil: in France, Russia, Germany, and China. This can be so for the same reason that humanism in its scientific mode—the understanding of man by science—ends by eliminating man qua man.

Ethical monotheism, by contrast, stands opposed to all of this. Unlike paganism, it is utterly *un*natural. Its appearance over four thousand years ago, and subsequent efflorescence in a uniformly pagan world, is beyond historical explanation. Frederick the Great of Prussia, friend of Voltaire and of religious liberty in the French revolutionary spirit—and a man much tormented by the conflict between his desire to sustain religious faith and his inability to do so—challenged his chaplain to point him with a word toward God. The bishop replied that he could do so; indeed he could fulfil his request literally, with but a single world. "And what single word can possibly carry the burden of such illumination?" asked Frederick. "Israel," replied his chaplain.

Monotheism, of course, claims that every individual and group, however different by nature, however differently inclined or gifted or handicapped, is accountable to the same overarching moral standard. At a practical level, this means that all men are accountable to but one set of values, goals, and laws. Which is to say, monotheistic society is univalent: before the God who establishes this uniform law all men are treated as equals, whether it is to their immediate gain, as they see it, or to their detriment to be so treated. Monotheistic societies therefore tend to be egalitarian, not in outcome but in process. The monotheistic God is no respecter of persons.

And monotheism presupposes a critical distinction between the Creator and the creation, and hence also between the Creator and His creatures, including man. Furthermore, man qua man (not man as

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biochemical machine) is perceived to contain within himself an utterly unnatural capacity for spirit, which, though in the world, is not of it. This means that man is a dual creature. He in some measure opposes his own instinctive nature, and does so precisely at the point of moral choice. Put differently, in monotheism it is to be anticipated that moral choices will often involve opposition to what is natural. Though monotheists will recognize the value in its own frame of reference of any given instinct (e.g., hunger as an index of the need for food), all instinctive pleasure will be submitted to a single overarching higher purpose and therefore modulated, restricted, and, at times, eschewed.

Because they are creaturely and not divine, the instincts are not elevated to the status of final arbiters of individual or social mores. In other words, they are not worshipped. Monotheistic worship therefore tends *away* from the violent, hedonistic, and orgiastic. The history of ancient Israel as laid out in the Old Testament is in large part the two-millenium-long struggle of the worship of God against all the various forms of pagan worship that dominated the ancient Near East. Finally, as distinguished from paganism, monotheism is neither idolatrous nor humanistic, since it refrains from making idols—whether of wood and stone, or of the purely mental variety—of the elements of human nature.

Monotheism declares that although the satisfaction of instinctive drives gives pleasure, by itself it ultimately does not give joy; that we seem, rather, to be so constituted—because of our dual, composite nature—as to require for the latter something that goes beyond mere pleasure; that the pursuit of pleasure apart from the spirit leads inevitably to emptiness and despair; that to worship pleasure is ultimately to seek death (a conundrum Freud described, but found no way out of, apparently, either for himself or others).

From this perspective, all our longings for instinctive gratification point beyond themselves to something else, something which is neither found in, nor reducible to, mere humanity. This longing is so great that, when we are unable to attach it to its proper, eternal object and instead attach it to some form of instinctive gratification, the pursuit of that instinctive gratification toward an end it can never achieve becomes compulsive, even addictive, and ultimately monstrous. In drugs the drug addict, in alcohol the alcoholic, in sex the philanderer, in winning the gambler, in food the glutton, and in sleep the slothful all seek the one God and know it not.

If he pays any attention to it at all, the relentless opposition of the Old Testament to idolatry and pagan worship must seem to the modern reader at best a strange archaic obsession, at worst an offensive manifestation of a nationalism and chauvinism that we are well off without. In this light, it makes perfect sense for him to replace such monomania with the tolerant syncretism that now constitutes the theology of most mainstream churches and synagogues. But the conflict between monotheism and paganism is not merely historical; it is a recurrent battle for the soul of man that has never ceased. It is joined now as ever.

Surely, in his attempt to eliminate spirit and equate it with neurosis and to reduce morality to convention, Freud had no intention of accelerating this pagan reformation. Given his upbringing and rectitude, quite the reverse. But still, intended or not, that is what he did. Jung, on the other hand, saw clearly what was to come, although perhaps not all of its consequences, and embraced it.

Jung's failure to understand the moral dangers inherent in the pagan revolution his psychological theories fostered was foreshadowed by his early—later repented of—failure to recognize the dangers inherent in National Socialism. Although he did come to decry, if belatedly, the specific direction that Nazi ideology eventually took, Jung actually never fully understood the implications of his own profound insights about the essence of Nazism. For it was he himself who correctly saw that the tremendous popular enthusiasm aroused by the Nazis could only be accounted for by seeing it as an awakening of man's latent pagan nature.

Jung also understood, as few of his contemporaries did—nor do many nowadays—that mere rationalism, "tolerance," and humanism is no match for the awakened pagan soul. His insights were, and often still are, dismissed as fuzzy mysticisms. As early as 1916, Jung wrote:

> As the Christian view of the world loses its authority, the more menacingly will the "blonde beast" be heard prowling about in its underground prison, ready at any moment to burst out with devastating consequences. When this happens in the individual it brings about a psychological revolution, but it can also take a social form.

Perhaps, as some authors claim, the National Socialists, especially the elite, deliberately educated themselves in the occult and the pagan in order better to live it out; perhaps they didn't. No matter: once the bands of divinely revealed morality are loosed, human nature will reproduce all its native forms de novo anyway. What Jung failed to see—and what he of all people should have seen, for it is a conclusion that flows inevitably from his own concept of "archetype"—was that the awakening of this pagan nature leads inevitably and progressively to Nazi-like phenomena of a greater and greater intensity. To the end of his life he maintained, rather, the Gnostic view of things—that an accommodation between "matter" and "spirit" could and should be worked out, that the "dark side" of human nature needed to be integrated

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into a single, overarching "wholeness." In the light of his blindness with respect to the Nazis, this kind of futile, romantic utopianism on his part is not unlike that of present-day Marxists who point to the collapse of Eastern European communism not as evidence of communism's failure, but of the misapplication by inept bunglers of an eternally true and beautiful idea.

Jung's theory of archetypes, when limited to the domain of psychology, provides a brilliant model of the way natural, human personality arises from and organizes its longings around the instincts. It thus helps us to apprehend the different categories according to which people are apt to spiritualize (their own) nature(s), and thus fall into the worship of it. It provides, as it were, a taxonomy of the gods, and hence of human obsession, sin, and idolatry. But unfortunately, the theory itself is all too easily turned into that very spiritualization, becoming in its own right truly a modern Gnosticism. It shares with all Gnosticisms a profound blindness to the true nature of evil, a blindness that could be said to arise from its very brilliance. As Jerome Politzer said about the Gnosticism of the Greek and Roman world, it "was brilliant, extraordinarily spiritual, amoral, and totally false."

Jung, viewing morality in terms that were precisely the opposite of Freud's, nevertheless arrived at precisely the same end. For Freud, good and evil devolve into mere constructs that arise out of man's morally neutral biosocial nature—the cognitive derivatives of animal pleasure and animal pain—and are hence, as absolutes, illusory. For Jung, good and evil evolve into two equal, balanced, cosmic principles that belong together in one overarching synthesis represented in the "Self," and in their union they are transcended.

After its condemnation by the Church as a heresy, Gnosticism continued to lead a clandestine existence as a kind of perpetual spiritual counterculture. Magic, Neo-Platonism, Alchemy: all these flourished underground during the great ages of the Church, providing a secretive, psychic, human-oriented, polytheistic, and morally relativistic counterpoint to the God-oriented ethical monotheism being carried forward by Christianity. Jung explicitly identified depth psychology, especially his own, as heir to the Gnostic tradition, especially in what he considered its superiority over Christianity in its handling of the problem of evil: "In the ancient world the Gnostics, whose arguments were very much influenced by psychic experience, tackled the problem of evil on a much broader basis than the Church Fathers."

In fact, the Gnostics devolved quickly into the embrace of evil, inevitably the consequence of an "inclusivist" position toward it. Modern "nature" and "goddess" theologies are following the same path. Their embrace of nature as divine inevitably forces them to include not just matter, but evil as well, within the Godhead, as in Sallie McFague's *Models of God*. So widely accepted once again is this "new" psychotheology of nature that this particular book won the Academy of Religion's 1988 Award of Excellence.

But, in fact, as long ago as the early 1950s, Jung, by psychologizing the Spirit and identifying matter with the feminine, had already incorporated into his conception of the Godhead both matter and evil. This is the dominant theme of his major work, *Aion*, especially the chapter entitled "Christ, a Symbol of the Self":

> There can be no doubt that the original Christian conception of the *imago Dei* embodied in Christ meant an all-embracing totality that even includes the animal side of man. Nevertheless the Christ-symbol lacks wholeness in the modern psychological sense, since it does not include the dark side of things but specifically excludes it in the form of a Luciferian opponent.

The "original" Christ figure Jung therein develops is exclusively symbolic, ahistorical, and congruent with Gnostic representations. For the individual illumined by this Christ, "the original state of oneness with the God-image is restored" and brings about "an integration, a bridging of the split in the personality caused by the instincts striving apart in mutually contradictory directions."

Thus although intensely "spiritual" (indeed stripped of any meaningful physical reality), this Gnostic Christ plays no role in mediating a *non*-instinctive dimension to human life. The result of the "integration" fostered by this symbolic "Messiah" is nothing beyond the more efficient orchestration of instinctive gratification (however this gratification is subjectively perceived). The characterization of such an integration in the language of the mystery religions lends to it an aura of "spirituality" that effectively obscures its fundamental tendency toward hedonism and amorality.

Late in his life, the most "pneumatic" of the Gospel writers, John, saw the first Gnostic revisionists emerge from within the earliest circle of Christians. These were men who wanted for themselves the salvation promised by Christianity but who could affirm neither the physical and literal reality of the astounding events attested to by Scripture and by the Apostles nor the moral humbling required to accept substitutionary atonement as a necessity. John's perspective on them is unflinching: "[A]s you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. . . . They went out from us but they did not really belong to us. . . ."

The "anti" in "antichrist" does not here mean so much "against" as "in the place of." John's emphasis

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is thus not so much on the figure of a single Antichrist as on false, specifically Gnostic, representations of Christ that shared certain common characteristics. Chief among these is the presentation of the *image* of Christ as solely symbolic, or mystical, or allegorical.

John attributes the "spirit of the antichrist" less to actual unbelievers than to the "false prophets" who arose among the early Christians. These were of a certain "spirit" and are believers, as it were, of a kind: believers in a merely spiritualized (non-fleshly) "Christ."

To all Gnostic redemptive schemes (wherein salvation can be attained through knowledge), atoning sacrifice by another is both meaningless and useless. Such acts are honored, therefore, only as symbols, metaphors, or allegories, at best. Gnostic theologies are all therefore in profound conflict with orthodox Christianity (and with traditional Judaism as well). It is typical of their overvaluation of allegory, and their corollary devaluation of the actual, historical dimension of religious reality, that Gnostics (whether ancient or modern, and whether overt or inadvertent) invariably fail to comprehend this contradiction. They thus also tend to embrace a shallow, intellectualized syncretism, to reject as "intolerant" any substantive concept of "heresy" and of course to hold themselves superior to "literalists."

Not surprisingly, Jung, in defense of his deliberate, psychological reformulation of Gnostic ideas, takes direct aim at John:

> The coming of the antichrist is not just a prophetic prediction—it is an inexorable psychological law whose existence, though unknown to the author of the Johannine Epistles, brought him a sure knowledge of the impending *enantiodromia* [the turning of a thing into its opposite]. Consequently he wrote as if he were conscious of the inner necessity for this transformation, though we may be sure that the idea seemed to him like a divine revelation. In reality, every intensified differentiation of the Christ-image brings about a corresponding accentuation of its unconscious complement, thereby increasing the tension between above and below.

But apart from the simplistic reductionism of this analysis, Jung has missed John's point entirely—namely, that not necessarily merely an equal opposite to Christ, "antichrist" is an ever-recurring "spiritual" perspective. What perspective is that? John continues the above citation: "They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. . . ."

Jung's historical overview of subsequent Christian centuries set forth in *Aion* suffers from the same covert materialism, psychological reductionism, and overvaluation of Gnostic presuppositions. Nonetheless, he does capture the essence of the large-scale historical dynamic, and seen rightly—properly refocused, if you will—Jung's spiritual myopia provides a key to understanding what is happening in our own time:

> A factor that no one has reckoned with, however, is the fatality inherent in the Christian disposition itself, which leads inevitably to a reversal of its spirit—not through the obscure workings of chance, but in accordance with psychological law. The ideal of spiritually striving for the heights was doomed to clash with the materialistic earth-bound passion to conquer matter and master the world. This change became visible at the time of the "Renaissance." The word means "rebirth," and it referred to the renewal of the antique spirit. We know today that this spirit was chiefly a mask; it was not the spirit of antiquity that was reborn, but the spirit of medieval Christianity that underwent strange pagan transformations, exchanging the heavenly goal for an earthly one. . . . The subsequent developments that led to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution have produced a world-wide situation today that can only be called "antichristian" in a sense that confirms the early Christian anticipation of the "end of time." It is as if, with the coming of Christ, opposites that were latent till then had become manifest, or as if a pendulum had swung violently to one side and were now carrying out the complementary movement in the opposite direction. No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell.

Jung thus manages at once both to acknowledge the rather astonishing accuracy of John's vision and to reduce it to a mere self-fulfilling prophecy, a projection of John's (and Christianity's) one-sidedness. It is as though Jung, in spite of seeing with rare perspicacity the breathtakingly accurate prophetic implications of John's two-thousand-year-old vision, could not submit himself to the moral fundamentals upon which the vouchsafing of such a vision was surely predicated. He was driven therefore to reduce it to a picture of the mere sequential acting-out in history of first one, then the opposite, human passion; passions which John was only capable of "foretelling" because his unconscious was so desperately trying to get the benighted, excessively moral, man back in balance.

The reappearance of these archaic Gnostic notions in psychological guise, as a fully articulated and widely accepted counter-theology, likely reflects both the influence of Jung in divinity schools (where he is commonly and wrongheadedly seen as the only "spiritual" alternative to a relentlessly triumphant materi-

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alism) and the truly astonishing number of clergy who have become Jungian analysts. Many of these are quite prominent both within the churches and within Jungianism.

A single historical line thus connects the pagan religions of the ancient Near East (including Canaan), to the Jewish heretical-mystical sects of the Qumran region (the precursors of later Gnosticism), to pre- and early Christian Gnosticism itself, to the Manichean dualism of the late Roman and Aryan Empires, to the various classical heresies (Cathar, Albigensian, Bogomil, etc.), to medieval Alchemy and Templarism, and thence into the embracing, transforming alembic of Renaissance Neoplatonism, with its interpenetrating emphases on magic, humanism, and science. From there it is but a very short step indeed to the modern reduction of spirit to psyche and/or soma and the consequent pagan resurgence through which we are now suffering.

In reaction to the profound reductionism latent in the classical psychoanalytic vision of man, explicitly spiritual schools of psychoanalysis and psychology have arisen, in large part influenced by Jung, that directly embrace the pagan, Gnostic solution to the dread of meaninglessness, taking the instincts themselves, and spiritualizing them to fill the void. Yet here, too, in this seemingly opposite approach, man's merely animal nature is vaulted once again to the highest place of honor.

IV

Just a couple of decades ago, the notion of a coming pagan resurgence, under the banner of depth psychology, would have seemed batty at best, especially in light of the buttoned-down denizens of, say, the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. These gentlemen and ladies hardly looked or acted like the kind of people who had taken the lid off the steaming cauldron of human passion. But that appearance was deceptive. For as decent, mid-twentieth-century Americans, they were living their lives not according to the open worship of instinct latent in the psychoanalysis they quite usefully practiced and espoused, but according to the moribund Jewish or Christian standards they had inherited from their parents. With some semblance of a moral law still in place—we hasten to remind ourselves that neither this moral law, nor adherence to it, can in any way be derived from psychoanalysis itself—their act of peering unflinchingly into the depths of human nature was often salutary, a scientifically turbocharged version of confession. But not two generations were needed for this residual moral cover to pass.

Nowadays, as we see, explicitly pagan ideologies and theologies are ubiquitous and are quite unselfconsciously named as such. They are replacing conventional theologies in major divinity schools; television shows presenting them in dramatic visual form are wildly popular; books espousing their point of view are regular best-sellers; churches are rewriting their liturgies to accommodate them. Recently, two such books, both written by Jungian analysts, were number one and number four on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Another, dedicated by author (and analyst) Ginette Paris to the goddess Artemis (Roman: Diana the Huntress), is entitled *The Sacrament of Abortion*:

> It is time to call back the image of Artemis, the wild one, who despite her beauty refuses marriage and chooses to belong only to herself. . . . When we are constantly paying attention to another person, to a group, to relatives, colleagues, and friends, how much time, energy, and space are left . . . for being present to one's self? . . . When the Artemis myth manifests itself in our lives, it can be recognized by a sense of no longer belonging to a group, a couple, or a family; it represents a movement away from . . . fusion with others, the most extreme example of fusion being the connection between a mother and her young children.
>
> Artemis . . . invites us to return from others, to become autonomous.

In a chapter entitled "The Cure for Guilt," the author continues:

> Our culture needs new rituals as well as laws to restore to abortion its sacred dimension. . . . I've heard women address their [aborted] fetus directly . . . and explain why it is necessary to separate now. Others write a letter of farewell and read it to a friend, a spouse, or indeed to their whole family. Still others invent their own farewell ritual, inspired perhaps by rituals from other cultures, like offering a little doll to a divinity as a symbol of the aborted fetus.
>
> . . . [T]he pro-lifers see the spiritual dimension but keep it imprisoned within official orthodoxies, as if no other form of spirituality existed. What if my religious beliefs are pagan?

These explicitly articulated ideas are not so distant and off-the-wall as they must seem to a reader coming upon them for the first time. In their regression to archaic modes of thought, morality, and behavior they follow the gradient of descent to nature: they describe that which human beings, left to their own devices, invariably turn into. What is perhaps more frightening, however, is the fact that such articulations do not so much lead the culture as justify after the fact (for intellectuals) the widespread degradation of character and behavior that has already taken place. FT

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Fidel and the Faithful

Thomas C. Oden

The tang of the fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice and the bouquet of moist avocados still linger in my memory. I can still hear the sounds of squeaking bicycle wheels and smell the stench of highway diesels. Now, Proust-like, I sit in New Jersey trying to reconstruct my times past in Cuba.

Invited late last year by the Methodist Bishop of Cuba to address the Ecumenical Seminary at Matanzas, I went to listen to the voices of Cuban Christians. My motive: to attend carefully to the specific timbre of their voices, to hear exactly what they were saying, and to bring their thoughts to a North American audience.

It is difficult for non-Cuban Americans to get into Cuba except by specific invitation. Thus for years there was a motley parade of ecclesial sycophants making their way to the country to pay homage to Fidel and condemn American policy. Knowing that I could not even pretend to do the same, I was relieved to discover that it was no longer necessary. Formerly, the only link between Cuban evangelical congregations and the North American Christian laity had been an ultra-liberal church bureaucracy whose liberation theology rhetoric had now come to sound extremely dated and passé to Cubans, with the result that communication had become rather disjointed between Cuban postrevolutionary Christian revivalism and American church bureaucrats.

The posters in Havana's José Marti Airport gave me my first glimpse of a seismic shift taking place in Cuban consciousness. Near the airport one could see faded Spartan red and black posters declaring "Socialism or Death." But in the airport proper one found freshly painted murals of scuba divers, surfers, colonial architecture, and exciting night life—a frank appeal to tourism.

I was never once hungry in Cuba. The staple foods are a delicious rice and black beans, a lot of fresh fruit, many textures of breads. Then there is that marvelous Cuban ice cream.

I was reminded of my boyhood days in Oklahoma in the thirties. We never once thought of ourselves as poor, though Oklahoma was as hard hit as any state by the depression. Cuban parents are similarly proud as they engage in a constant battle to provide enough calories for their families. Many material goods are, of course, simply unavailable. What is learned in an economy like this is: you get by, you invent. You enjoy what you can—everyone in Cuba, for instance, seems to enjoy dancing. When I was a kid, we never threw anything away, and repeatedly recycled what we had. That is what Cuba feels like to me. Under these conditions you become very creative. Take automobiles, for example. They are kept running for decades after their contemporaries have disappeared from Miami streets.

In Matanzas City I walk past a movie theater whose paint is peeling on the outside, but inside its lobby remains daringly elegant, with its marble floors, mahogany furniture, and a graceful old Spanish colonial ambience. A hand-made sign announced the next movie: *Falling in Love in the USA*—in color.

I step into a dank and dimly lit government food store, where powdered milk is going for two pesos per kilo, but only when available. The rice was advertised as imported. Other prices listed were sugar, black beans, and onions. Very little stock was visible. Next door an orthopedic shoe was priced at twenty-three pesos, other shoes for fifteen. A few doors down was the Vietnam Bookstore, with titles displayed such as *The History of Precapitalist Economy*, *How to Build a House*, a medical textbook, and *The More Transparent Region* by Carlos Fuentes.

Unforgettable for me was the sight of the lean faces of Cubans looking into the window of a "dollar store," gazing upon the consumer world of soap and perfume and electronics from which they are barred. Since I had dollars, I was permitted into this elite supermarket world of glimmering goods, as hungry faces peered in through the glass. Still, this does not seem to be greatly diminishing their actual levels of happiness. Consumer goods seem far less important to the scale of happiness than North American consumers take them to be. I see a young couple holding hands as they walk by. What else do they need? They have each other.

Yet any statement one makes about Cuba always seems in the next breath to be partly wrong, crying out for qualification the moment after it is observed. Every accurate report thus has to be dialectical, descriptive of unfolding juxtapositions.

Many factories and businesses are either closed or working half time, due to the oil shortage. I could see oil wells pumping in many places, yet Cuba itself is supplying only about 5 percent of its petrole-

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um needs.

During the Soviet dependency there was never really any unemployment to speak of. Now when a factory is closed down, people may try to find another job, perhaps in agriculture, sometimes with retraining. What makes things so difficult for ordinary families is that the 150-200 pesos the government gives for monthly salary does not supply sufficient calories to survive. 150 pesos trades on the free market for a couple of dollars. Professionals may make 250 pesos, but all they can buy is what is rationed out in the government food stores, whose shelves are often mostly empty. A tube of toothpaste or bar of soap would cost most of one's monthly salary in pesos—if one could only find it to buy. Even one who has pesos often cannot buy anything with them.

Cubans have become economically creative. They bargain and barter among themselves. They often find ways of pilfering from their jobs, or they hustle as entrepreneurs. If someone works in a factory making coffee, he may find ways of marketing coffee privately. If another works in a plumbing parts factory, he becomes a part-time plumber.

It is no longer illegal to hold dollars; no one is arrested as he would have been a few years ago. But dollars are hard to come by. Tragically, the rapid growth of prostitution is evidence of how desperate young single mothers have become in shifting to a dollar economy.

There are more professionals in Cuba than in any other Latin American country. Anyone can acquire a free education if only he solemnly pledges to rule out all talk of God or any religious premise for social change. But just having an education does not mean you have a job or income.

When I asked a friend how long the people will put up with this, he first reminded me that he could go to jail for answering, and then told me:

> Once it was the case that if you did not support the government, you could not get a job or an education. Now more and more are needing less and less from the government to survive. Increasingly the government does not have much more than words to offer. As people depend less and less upon the regime, they have more freedom to think for themselves politically. Cuba may be in the last months or years of this system.

The prevailing ideology is now popularly called not socialism but *socio-ism*—which means "who you knowism." *Socio* means friend. What you get depends on whom you know. If you have a friend who works in a TV factory, for instance, you may have a way to get your TV repaired. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the economy has been reduced to barter and hustle.

No Cubans I met were tempted to counterrevolutionary violence. Only expatriate Cubans fantasize that scenario.

Socialist educational policies have ravaged the family, once the very centerpiece of traditional Cuban life. Young people as a matter of educational policy are separated from their parents for several years at puberty. The kids must leave their families and go off to study socialism and work in rural cooperatives. They are sent to schools far away. But lately the young people are coming back to their families in droves. Like almost everything else in Cuba, the family separation policy is not working.

Free love may not be encouraged, but it is offered no moral restraints by the official ideology. And AIDS has hit Cuba with a vengeance. An HIV-positive readout will thrust one instantly and irreversibly into a permanent quarantine in an isolated sanitarium. Women entering the work force are often separated from their husbands for inordinate periods of time. In short, the nuclear family is in an uphill struggle to survive the assaults of socialist ideology. Still, there is no question that, its damage having been done, that ideology has lost its grip.

It remains precarious to be a postrevolutionary Christian in Cuba. To be sure, believers are gradually becoming less wary of surveillance by the old neighborhood block informers. Still, I was able to tape record many of my conversations with them only after receiving an anguished permission. Some asked not to be recorded at all. Sometimes in the course of a taped conversation I would be asked to turn off my recorder, due to anxiety about the safety and well-being not of the speaker but of his children.

The church itself is getting bolder, however, willing to suffer if necessary for Christ's sake, just as many Christians are increasingly willing to put their bodies on the line to attest the resurrected Lord. Every adult baptism, for instance, is charged with a sense of great consequence. In this environment, the commitment to personal evangelism ranks above every other objective, far above any political identification. In other words, whatever the future holds for the Cuban government, the Cuban church is becoming clearer about its own particular identity and mission. Any former identification of theology with socialism has by now largely been shattered. Which does not mean that the church has now become a self-conscious counterrevolutionary force, but that its most characteristic form of decisive Christian action is simply to make the gospel of Christ available to the Cuban people.

Moreover, the church has determined to share the desperate poverty created by socialism without relying on outside sources of support. A phrase I heard repeatedly among Cuban Christians is "the church is accompanying the people."

The metaphor of "accompanying" is contrasted with that of "departing"—applied to those who have

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left the island. Those who left have irretrievably left not only their wealth and property but their family ties in Cuba. Thus those who remained behind are clearly distinguished from those who departed. On this question we find an almost complete polarization. The diaspora Cubans who left under duress and are committed to returning feel that they have the right to participate in the political future of the island. They have suffered a painful disruption of their lives and families, they still love Cuba, and they want to share in its future. Whereas the "homeland" Cubans feel that those who departed did so voluntarily and most of them will never return from their present lives of ease and prosperity; hence they have no right to participate in the political future of the island. Many have been gone thirty-five years; their kids are hooked on a standard of living and economic expectations that could never be adjusted to the actual conditions in their former homeland. This is the polarity that now vexes the Cuban reality.

Among many devout Catholics and Protestants on the island, however, one can now sense the beginning of a new spirit of reconciliation, not yet strong, but growing: the view that all Cubans, both at home and abroad, belong to one family and must remain so.

Whether the Castro regime stands or falls is a question that the postrevolutionary Christians treat with considerable nonchalance. What does matter to them is whether the church will continue to accompany the people, walking in the Way. Cuban evangelicals now insist on nonidentification with any political ideology. They especially resist being identified with any loose counterrevolutionary talk, having decided to walk patiently with the people who are determined to survive all forms of political messianism, whether of the left or right.

To be sure, there is much anger directed at the old system of socialist education and the failed command economy. Christians remember how some schools founded by the churches were destroyed by mobs. They are mindful of how church properties were vandalized after the revolution, of how the old school in Santa Clara was converted to a Communist Party headquarters. But there is a will to forgive and move on.

Some of these church educational institutions are coming back. There are legal petitions now being submitted to reclaim them rightfully: hospitals, church camps, parochial schools, church buildings, social rehabilitation and mission agencies. In some cases where the original property is not being returned, new options are being made available. The regime is no longer able to ignore the claims of long-suffering church plaintiffs.

The special challenge of the church in these times of spiritual crisis, economic blockade, and physical hunger is to help people understand, especially as they come to realize that the gods of Marxism-Leninism will take them exactly nowhere, the hope that comes from God.

When many Protestant pastors left Cuba following 1959, the lay leadership found itself entirely free to reinvent the church, with the result that the present revival is being led by the laity and the youth rather than by the clergy. The Catholic form of charismatic renewal, like the Protestant, is largely a postrevolutionary youth-led movement. Each month there are 1,600 or so baptisms of Catholic young people. They come from wholly secularist forms of education, knowing almost nothing of Christian symbols or holy writ, but desiring to learn.

And those members of the clergy who remained have been uncommonly courageous about helping to enable this lay renewal—a true lesson in providential missiology.

One of the results of the revolutionary period was the growth of the house-church movement. This was not planned, but an outgrowth of government policies that made it illegal either to renovate churches or start new ones. The faithful learned that they could safely invite people to their homes for prayer, testimony, hymn-singing, and Bible study. Thus the resourcefulness and vitality of the Cuban church has borne undeniable testimony.

One day I spoke with His Excellency, Jaime Ortega, Archbishop of Havana. The Archbishop had served in forced labor camps alongside Methodist Bishop Joel Ajo. This seemed a most interesting circumstance. When I asked whether there are any serious bilateral ecumenical conversations between Methodists and Catholics, I got the same answer from the Archbishop as I did from Methodist leaders. There are formally cordial fraternal relations, but since the mid-seventies there have been fairly deep strategic differences between Catholics and Protestants. Catholics feel that the Protestant liberation theologians and the Ecumenical Council have been too snug with Fidelismo. Protestants do not see the Catholics as ready for any significant dialogue, still protecting their privileged prerevolutionary turf. One could not escape the feeling that if Protestants and Catholics could ever get together, the balance of power in Cuba could shift dramatically. The regime undoubtedly delights in watching the old enmities between Protestants and Papists being rekindled. Would a unified Catholic-Protestant voice annoy the regime?, I asked the Archbishop. "I do not ignore the possibility that the government might wish to see greater disunity between Catholics and Protestants, with the purpose of exercising greater control over the religious opposition," he answered.

How did Catholics view the radical Presbyterian Confession of 1977 that declared participation in the Marxist revolution to be a premise of church membership and an expression of the kingdom of God? Archbishop Ortega: "Protestant liberation theology has

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never had much impact upon Cuban Catholics. It never resonated very deeply with the Cuban reality."

As for the serious rekindling of Protestant religion in Cuba, my first glimpse of it was in an Afro-Caribbean Methodist Church on the sprawling fringe of Havana. The church was jam-packed—filled to the brim. Many were young people under twenty-five. Escorted to the front row, I was wedged in as if with a shoehorn. Directly in front of me was an electronic keyboard, a jerry-rigged assortment of archaic percussion instruments, and a jumble of steel guitars and maroon tambourines. Cuban Christian renewal was clearly coming alive to a strong Afro-Caribbean beat.

The black pastor asked for someone to come forward who had never before been to church. A couple brought up an infant—not for baptism, but for earnest prayer looking toward a possible future baptism. Baptism is a clear-cut countercultural decision in Cuba.

The prayer proceeded, and I noticed that a gaggle of neighborhood boys were squinting through the windows, trying to get a glimpse of the action. The communion liturgy was followed by fervid preaching, an invitation to repentance and evangelical faith, and concluding with a healing service that offered prayer for all who were infirm. As "glory singers" led the congregation in impassioned, rafter-raising song, whole families swayed together in heartfelt, rousing praise of the Lord, hands uplifted. An invitation was given for all to offer thanks to God for special graces of recent days.

It was a vivid, unforgettable, live happening of new birth. It could not be fabricated. It was an unaffected, unpretentious work of God the Spirit. The evidences of revival were the fervency of prayers, the intensely felt presence of the Holy Spirit, lives being morally transformed, behavior patterns reconstructed, courageous decisions made. I knew instantly I was a part of this body, and they were living members of the body of Christ in which I live and breathe. You are in my prayers, I said. The white-necked North American walked through the congregation exchanging warm greetings in the Lord.

As the cadence and intensity mounted in exuberance, the lights went off unexpectedly—a frequent irritation of Cuban life today. A bright kerosene lantern was quickly lit and brought in and hung swaying on the ceiling, illuminating the singing, rocking congregation, which never skipped a beat.

The preaching was as impassioned as the praise, its focus being that each one is in a war with Satan. The final outcome at the end of history we already know, but the struggle continues this side of the end in every soul. Each one must do his own battle with Satan. You have never met such an adversary. He presents himself to you as a friend. You cannot afford to be naive about this combat. You will be mocked by others. They will not understand you. They will scold you. But do not be alarmed, and do not complain. These things of the flesh must be understood through the spirit. Rejection is to be expected, even within your own family. You are called now to make a decision, the preacher continued. It could be the most important of your life: Accept Jesus in your heart. Trust him for forgiveness of your sins. The Spirit was ricocheting through the packed hall. Fourteen answered the invitation, willing to put their lives and careers and resources on the line. Several were young people, one a mother with a baby in her arms, another a lean, strong man in khaki working clothes.

The sinner's prayer brought new life as the penitents prayed with the pastor, repeating each phrase aloud: I repent of my sins. I accept Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I want to be his servant. Give me grace to follow, to engage without complaint in whatever battle is required, to face rejection if necessary, to be faithful unto death. I renounce sin and Satan. I belong to Christ. I want to walk in the way. Lift me up, Lord, from my fallen condition, and present me reconciled to God the Father. Later, many other congregants of all ages came forward for prayer for the sick.

From that moment on, I decided I must not allow myself to be distracted from the most consequential event in Cuba today: the work of the Spirit to reawaken faith in God. I knew that I had to resist the temptation to become fixated on political ephemera when a bona fide religious reawakening was transpiring before my eyes.

Unquestionably a true revival of religion is unfolding. To North American eyes, it appears at first glance to be very charismatic. But on closer inspection the *charismata* have a distinctively Cuban rhythm and sound and stamp. Later I would discover that this religious revival is affecting the whole spectrum of Christian communities from Roman Catholic to Baptist.

On another occasion, I was invited for pre-breakfast coffee by a venerable professor who had witnessed three generations of change. In his spare apartment, potent black coffee was served in a delicate demitasse.

I asked about spiritual formation in the seminary. "Reading the Bible, allowing the Word of God to address the inner precincts of the heart," he answered. "This is how the Spirit enables Christians to come alive."

The churches are full of secular rebounders searching for meaning, he continued. Cuban Christianity is now at a point of development similar to the first three centuries of Christianity, when the church was living in a hostile environment. "Before Constantine, when the road was extremely difficult, the church was empowered by the Spirit through crisis after crisis. Then came Constantine and offered the

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church a favored place in the world. That is when its deepest spiritual temptations appeared. It was more difficult to be a Christian under Constantine than under Marcus Aurelius, more difficult to test out the promises of God. To live the Christian life is objectively just as difficult in a consumer-oriented economy as in a deteriorating socialist economy. Our faith calls us to live as if objectively insecure, so as to be better able to receive the security that faith distinctively gives, the security that abides through conflict and limitation."

In a Marxist society it is hardly a social advantage to be a Christian. Christian existence becomes an exciting, risk-laden summons rather than a boring obsession with establishment safety. "God only illumines the next step, not long distances ahead. We would like the way to be illumined for whole distance ahead, but the flickering light of the Word shows only the next step. God called Abram: Leave Ur. I will then tell you where you are going. To Paul he said: Go to the next city. I will tell you there what next. The risen Lord said to his disciples: Go to Galilee. You will find me there. It is humbling for the pilgrim to not know what is over the hill, to have no more foreknowledge than the next man. But this is precisely a part of our spiritual training—to take small steps without knowing what is over the hill, but trusting God on final outcomes. It is not enough that our students have enough to eat, and books to read. They must also learn to look daily to God for sufficiency."

The Cuban church is trying to decide whether it can bear the responsibility for bringing hope to Cuba. To be responsible for hope is to decide to bring hope in God into an otherwise hopeless situation. The stark absence of hope is partly a function of the failure of socialism, where humanistic hopes have been raised so precariously high. The collapse of these hopes now offers an unexpected opportunity to the proclaiming community to breathe out a new message of hope.

At the Ecumenical Seminary, all the students and faculty eat together, three meals a day. "The little we have we want to share with all who sit at our table," the rector said. "We do not want to have a table with much food but without love."

As I walked into the seminary's library, I had the feeling I was back in the antiquated city library of my youth during the 1930s. A large-print Underwood typewriter, vintage circa 1946, was the sole technological device in sight. I was shown a separate room of the library in which students were given the privilege of reading books. Not checking them out—reading them. Books are so rare and irreplaceable that the library cannot afford to let them be checked out.

Could North American seminarians send you books, I asked? Well, not by mail. They would likely be pilfered or lost in the mail. Why lost? Either they would be rerouted for profit through the black market or simply mislaid. A few might get through. How then could I deliver books? Try Cuban pastors in the U.S. who will then contact Cubans in transit to Havana. Is this dangerous? No, the police do not surveil books coming into Cuba with airline passengers.

As I sat in a modest apartment cradling a tiny cup of ebony coffee, one of the theological students calmly fleshed out this idea: The Methodist Church was born in America amid a sacramental void resulting from the Anglican clergy having fled to Canada. Thus American Methodism can rightly be said to be born out of the hunger for holy communion, for Wesley would never have ordained Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury apart from this long-standing, unresolved sacramental crisis. In just this way, the student continued, the Cuban church today, feeling, as it does, cut off from the rest of the ecumenical whole, especially treasures holy communion, and feels its unity with the body of Christ through the sacrament.

Here was an example of how the Cuban church spirit shows an extraordinary capacity to generate theological insight despite severe limitations. I have pondered and taught the documents of the Wesley literary corpus to graduate and theological students for three decades, but had never before that moment heard what now seems to me an almost obvious thesis stated so arrestingly. This student belongs to a Cuban Methodist family that remained in Cuba after the 1959 revolution. Only a few pastors were able to offer holy communion and baptize in due order. The hunger for the Eucharist never faded, and although eucharistic practice had become sporadic and uncertain, there is a deep postrevolutionary desire to rediscover a more meaningful sacramental life.

Buzzards circled the valley below the Seminary. A stone's throw away from the seminary grounds, I noticed a lone black buzzard sitting patiently fifty feet atop a high tree overlooking the leafy valley. His accomplices circling the valley below flew effortlessly, exploiting the wind. The freedom and ease of their flight was positively stately. What was it that was dying in the valley? A revolution. A system. An economy. A dream. A rhetoric. Insects, too, remain profusely alive on this lush green island. Everywhere this miniature biotic world is prospering amid the collapse of colossal economic and ideological schemes. The grass is growing fast around Matanzas harbor. Castro's revolution is being overtaken by time, despair, and frustrated hope. New hope must come from elsewhere. ☐

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Books In Review

Disparities of the Self

THE CELIBACY OF FELIX GREENSPAN. By LIONEL ABRAHAMS. *Academy Chicago Publishers. 256 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by **Molly Finn**

SOME YEARS AGO, during a spell of back trouble, I spent half an hour being wheeled around an airport in a wheelchair. For a few minutes I was alone, parked in the wheelchair in a busy lobby. The few minutes were memorable because they gave me a glimpse into the world of people whose disabilities show, are there for all to see, to pity, to comment on, to ridicule. Almost everyone who walked by looked twice; many stared. With no excuse beyond curiosity, strangers addressed me, usually using loud voices and very simplified language that showed they assumed my difficulties were mental as well as physical. Indeed, I felt that if this were to continue, my mental difficulties would soon outweigh my physical ones as I tried to sort out which was the real me—the wretch in the wheelchair or the complicated, intelligent, sturdy, and resourceful person I knew myself to be.

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I recalled this incident when I read *The Celibacy of Felix Greenspan*, an almost certainly autobiographical novel by Lionel Abrahams, a South African poet who was born with cerebral palsy. On the jacket of the book is a reproduction of a haunting portrait in oils, which I take to be a portrait of the author as an intense, brooding, bearded young man, arms crossed in his lap, one large hand seemingly relaxed, the other in a fist. The fist is also reproduced on the spine of the book. Is it a fist of anger and resentment stemming from a life filled with trials, misunderstanding, and prejudice? Is it a fist brought on by an uncontrollable muscle spasm? Is it a fist of determination, a symbol of the strength, the will of a man who learned to walk only after years of treatments, "miracle cures," and striving and who, with a mixture of innocence, cleverness, and a little spite, got himself through a childhood spent mostly in a hospital that sounds like an English boarding school, complete with bullying, betrayal, and anti-Semitism?

NONE OF THE questions raised by this powerful little book has an easy answer. In the matter of the fist, the answer to all three questions is probably "yes." The author is a poet, with a poet's ability to compress, to make symbols and images, to intermingle all the aspects of a subject into a web that can't be untangled. The title of the book is an ironic comment on the way Felix's life has been affected (or determined or definitively shaped or distorted or limited) by his physical handicap. Felix has definitely not chosen to be celibate. The book consists of seventeen named "stories" told by Felix in the third person. Each of them could stand alone as a meditation on some aspect of Felix's life, but together they form a unified portrait of a remarkable sensibility. "Miracles" begins with Felix going home to be cured by an Australian lady doctor, "but the lady doctor did not cure him because she suddenly had to go back to Australia." Next he went to "a German doctor called a quack," then to "a clever specialist," then to a faith healer. When he finally walked, he did it on his own. Walking down a street triumphant over his achievement, he heard someone say, "Aw, shame!" "What's she saying shame for?" asked Felix. "I can walk." "Yes, you can walk," said his mother. "But don't you realize,

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you're still not normal?"

In "Perfection" Felix tries to learn to control the unruliness of both his body and his personality. He is plagued by seizures, by involuntary body movements, by his inability to walk. He is angry, with a violent temper. He hates the boys who bully him, "scared all the time, and ashamed of the things they despised him for (except being Jewish)." Into his life comes Skipper Ross, the "teacher of perfection," who tells Felix, "You have to overcome the limitations of yourself and supersede your passions. That is the road to perfection." Skipper's mind-over-matter exercises and sermons inspire Felix to be constructive and focus on what he can do. But we see how deep this goes at the end of the chapter when Skipper tells Felix he has a "strong feeling that you are ready for something important" and gives Felix a day alone to figure out what it might be. "Something important . . . something wonderful," Felix says to himself. "It could only be bodily perfection."

In "Knowledge," perhaps the central chapter of the book, Felix recognizes his vocation and is accepted by his beloved writing teacher Johan de Waal as a "novice of the creative brotherhood . . . endowed with wings with which to soar above whatever made existence mundane, solemn, dull, ordinary." Feeling liberated from the shackles of his physical handicap, Felix's ideal is no longer physical perfection. But gaining knowledge beyond the facts he learns from his encyclopedia introduces him to a distressing array of life's complexities and ambiguities.

A PROBLEM, mordantly described in "Special Arrangements," is caused by well-meaning efforts of others to make life easier for Felix that actually constitute ruinous meddling. Special arrangements of this kind derail his incipient love affairs. For years Felix lives in the possibility that one girl or another will take him as a lover, but one after another they turn to him for friendship and to others for love. Felix's "Moment" finally comes when he is twenty-seven, an ecstasy in which "the scent of roses, the pleasure he took in the keenest lyrical poetry, came to his mind." But "when his orgasm came . . . he tried to suppress the convulsions, the silly giggling, snorting, hooting that came from the nets and knots of his nerves and not from his will."

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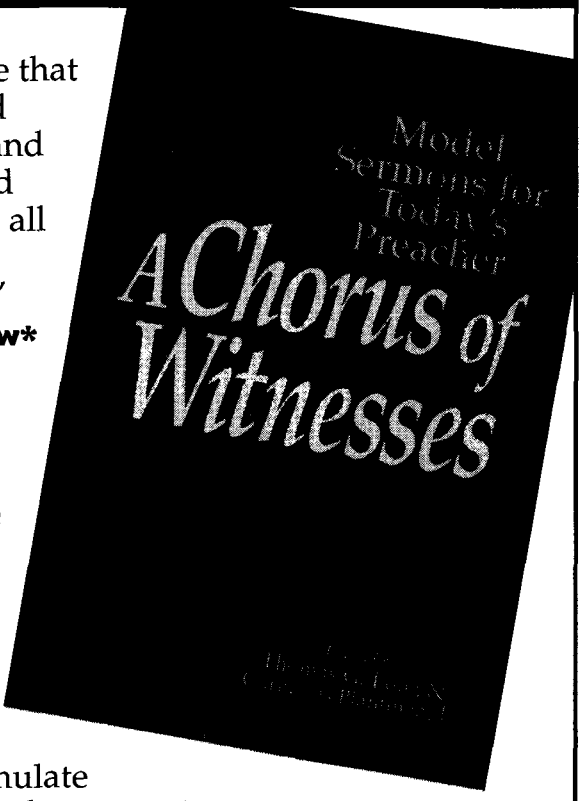

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through a midnight Paris bursting with life, Felix eats a "vast scalding bowl" of onion soup and picks his way through the bustling markets "beyond all fear, exulting amid the fruits of the earth."

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The Offense of Faith

THE SCANDAL OF THE GOSPELS: JESUS, STORY, AND OFFENSE. By DAVID MCCRACKEN. *Oxford University Press. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Michael Dodaro**

EVEN occasional readers of the Gospels notice that Jesus offends or astonishes most of the other characters who inhabit these ancient narrative landscapes. To those with vested interests in the political and religious status quo he is such an inflammatory presence that even mutual adversaries, Jews and Romans, conspire to destroy him. David McCracken, a literary critic who deals with the texts mostly in their present form, reasons that Jesus becomes the stone over whom many stumble because his discourses bristle with paradox, irony, and even satire. Briefly, his thesis is that Jesus is so disorienting, the narrative accounts of him so nuanced, that an encounter with him is likely to become a crisis leading either to scandal or to faith.

MICHAEL DODARO, *a new contributor, is a writer, medical technician, and baritone soloist in the choir at Blessed Sacrament Church in Seattle, Washington.*

It comes as no surprise that Kierkegaard should be cited extensively in support of this view. Kierkegaard's arguments—which, as anyone who is at all familiar with them knows, are legion—have at their core the question of what it means if, rather than taking offense at Jesus, one responds in faith. For modern readers Kierkegaard probes the depths of alienation, even from the self, that result from an encounter with Jesus. And for the encounter with Kierkegaard, McCracken proves to be an amiable negotiator: facing the austere Dane through his good offices is not the ordeal it can sometimes be.

McCracken begins by pointing out that the parables in the Gospels are, paradoxically, obstructions to understanding as well as revelations of the Kingdom of God. Not merely for rhetorical purposes does he refer to the parables as lies; even the terminology he uses to denote their

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revelatory aspect, "parabolic truth," has a relativistic tone. The parable of the vineyard laborers is, of course, problematic in any reading. The generosity, or unfairness, of a landowner who pays short-term laborers first, and just as much money as he pays those who have worked all day, poses the kind of enigma embodied in parables. Interpretations that come easily—that the parable represents abundance in the kingdom of God, or God's grace—are unsatisfying. The landowner's explanations only justify himself: he had an agreement with the earliest workers for a denarius; he can do as he wishes with his money. But what he calls generosity is conspicuously ungenerous to workers who got only what they bargained for.

What is most often revealed in the interpretation of ambiguous images is the disposition of the interpreter. McCracken says "enthusiastic capitalists" are prone to read their ideology into the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. It would seem that redistributionists could have a field day with it. Either way an ideological interpretation evades what McCracken calls a "collision" with truth. This highly charged event is latent in parables, but it comes only with the possibility of offense. If the story becomes an offense to normal expectations, and one is exposed in his habitual cant, the shock of recognition can be regenerative.

In the final analysis, McCracken argues, no interpretation of parables will suffice. In a section of his book called "Collision and Crisis," he finds a speaker who describes the crisis leading to faith, a crisis that continues, that, in the final analysis, *is* faith. Kierkegaard's Johannes Climacus of *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript* refers to it as the "highest passion of subjectivity," possible "only when the existing individual is at risk, venturing out over seventy thousand fathoms." Since man is a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, the physical and the spiritual, existential tension, inescapable for fully conscious living, becomes primary in a life lived before God. To shun the tension, to avoid paradox as embodied in parables, is to waste an opportunity to meet absolute otherness. McCracken adds, "To become conscious, to become a self, to become aware, requires the presence of the absolute other, God. The parables oppose spiritual blindness versus knowing what has been hidden since the foundation of the world, offense versus faith, death versus life."

McCracken takes up a dramatic incident from Matthew in which a Canaanite woman persists in spite of rebuffs and prevails on Jesus to heal her daughter. This scene is similar to a parable in that it sets up the same crisis. It carries the urgency of

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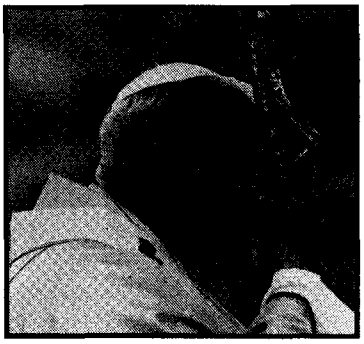

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alienation and offense leading to faith. Jesus treats the woman with scandalous contempt: "It is not fitting to take the children's bread and feed it to dogs." But she tenaciously refuses to be offended and corners him with the logic of his own metaphor. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Jesus marvels, and she gains her objective.

THE CONCLUSION to be avoided with regard to parables, encounters with Jesus, or entire Gospels is that they are Rorschach tests which disclose the contents of the psyche, or Zen koans defying rationality. They do disclose the secrets of the heart, and they often confound reason, but McCracken is arguing that instead of a "void of meaning," there is to be found, at the locus of conflict in these narratives, a person. An encounter with the God-man is not information: it is an event. Not a meaning, but a meeting.

The story of the Canaanite woman is scandalous enough to create a shock wave over twenty centuries. A fury like that latent in this incident for modern readers seems to follow Jesus, in the Gospels, everywhere he goes. His chief antagonists, the Pharisees, go ballistic on every encounter with him. Even his followers have their teeth set on edge by his fanaticisms. "Cut off your hand if it causes you to sin!" he rages. "If anyone comes after me and does not hate his father and mother and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

A canon of the historical-critical school is that a saying of Jesus is probably authentic if it is dissimilar both to historical Judaism preceding Jesus' time and to the teaching of the Hellenized Church of the later first and early second centuries. There would be little motive for the early church to invent such scandalous material. Schweitzer considered the hard sayings of Jesus to be of a piece with late, disillusioned Judaism. Interestingly enough, he considered them to be authentic and turned the world of biblical scholarship upside down with his thesis that the historical Jesus was thoroughly eschatological. If we could not have Jesus in the old progressive liberal guise, Schweitzer and many who followed him were willing to send him with his apocalyptic delusions back to his own pessimistic time and distinctly unmodern place. Eschatology was more scandalous to ideas of human progress prevalent at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of the century, when ebullient modernism is nearly extinct, Jesus does not shock us with his forebodings. The offense persists in new forms, but literary critics like McCracken may yet revive some of the vitality, even hope, to be found on the other side of crisis.

Kierkegaard, the recluse, encounters the absolute other in moment-by-moment, solitary crisis. But a great deal of Gospel narrative is dialogue. Jesus is so disturbing that people challenge him, trying to entangle him in some problem raised by what he says or does. Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan is an example of scandal as it arises in dialogue. When a lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus, in turn, asks the lawyer how he reads the law of Moses, meaning, more explicitly, how he interprets the law. The lawyer's answer extracts essential truths from a large body of commentary with which he was apparently familiar, and Jesus commends him. Love of God and of neighbor is the essence of the law. Jesus says simply, "Do this and you will live." But this is not the query of a devotee; it is a test. "Who is my neighbor?" asks the lawyer. The parable of the Good Samaritan is Jesus' scandalous rejoinder.

USING A Samaritan as moral exemplar among first century Jews is so outrageous it eclipses all other paraphrasable meanings that can be found in the parable. Unless modern readers grasp the offensiveness of this exchange, its impact is neutralized. The Samaritans' worship was not recognized as orthodox or in any way legitimate. The idea that a merciful Samaritan finds God's favor doing good neglected by a priest and a Levite would be inconceivable to the lawyer. It would be the equivalent of asking an Ivy League divine to admire a rural Jehovah's Witness, or an Evangelical to admire a New-Age enthusiast.

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Only after this offense has registered can we consider the ostensible moral lesson of the parable. McCracken finds three potential scandals in the parable: the wounded man who might defile the ritual purity of the priest and Levite; the Samaritan as moral exemplar to a progressive commentator on the Law; and the command to be merciful, which scandalizes both the lawyer in the story and the reader.

The Samaritan belongs to a category called "the eccentric" by Mikhail Bakhtin. The Samaritan, as McCracken points out, is outside the "normal seemly world." The parable in its entirety overturns the official established order in what Bakhtin calls carnivalized scandal. The Gospels are rife with carnivalized scandal. McCracken identifies Jesus' low birth and "the *mesalliance* of high and low characters: the son of God consorting with fishermen, lepers, prostitutes, and tax collectors." The severity of Jesus' statement, "Pluck out the offending eye," can be read as carnivalized scandal if we interpret it as a parody of moralism. The revivalist Charles Finney, after John Wesley, held to a doctrine called "entire sanctification." This refers to attainment of a level of purity at which one does not sin. What Jesus seems to be saying to the Pharisees and to puritans of every stripe can only be grasped in strident hyperbole, "You want to be righteous? Then don't even look at a woman lustfully. If your eye offends you, pluck it out. Cut off your hand if it causes you to sin!" Entire sanctification indeed, Mr. Finney.

Rigorists forget that moralism is the object of satire in the Gospels, but moral imperatives cannot be trivialized on the basis of words spoken in a very different cultural setting. Jesus criticized people hungry for the appearance of righteousness. When a fascination with antiheroes prevails, sympathy for eccentrics need not be encouraged. There are many ironies ripe for parody in a historically Christian culture when people are bending over backwards to evade the moralistic tendencies of

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old conventions. The Socratic tone of Jesus' teachings suggests that he thought conventional wisdom was mostly wrong. But carnivalistic scandal would have to cut both ways in a time when throwing off convention has itself become conventional, when puritanism has yielded to an obsession with sex, the Protestant work ethic to the welfare state, and aspirations toward an exemplary society, a "city on a hill," have been supplanted by an ethos that vilifies Western culture. If the parable of the good Samaritan is going to lead to a crisis of morality or of encountering God for modern readers, it might have to be modified considerably. To be scandalous, it might involve a motorist who stops at the roadside and is assaulted by a thug feigning injury. Justice may be the theme rather than mercy.

There is a corollary to McCracken's thesis that encountering Jesus in the Gospels creates a crisis which leads to offense, or to faith. If parables are lies, and truth "parabolic," faith is entry into a territory where God is so determinedly personal that he opposes systematic closure on theological and moral issues. Faith in a personal God defies reduction to doctrine. Morality requires attention to case-by-case complexity. The ground is slippery here. McCracken assays it in his final chapter on the Gospel of John.

The interplay of scandalous story and mythic plot, equivalent in other terminology to the relation of concrete and universal, begins in John's familiar prologue. The archetypical Logos doctrine is scandalized by rejection of the Word made flesh in the world. In Wagner's *Ring*, scandal erupts from the bottom of the river at the beginning of *Rhinegold*. Alberich steals the Rhinegold and disturbs the cosmos in a way that engages the gods. After the final immolation in *Götterdämmerung*, the river floods, and transcendence dissolves the offenses of human beings, gods, and other characters who are both or neither. The mythic plot of the Gospel of John begins in cosmic time, before the foundation of the world. In this transcendent realm, the Word is God. Scandalous story begins with the figure of John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness. McCracken says, "The Logos-Jesus constitutes John's mythic world plot, which, like light, illuminates events in time. John is the antithesis of the postmodern deconstructionist: [the author's] text, since it begins with and centers on the Logos, is 'logocentric,' the bête noir of deconstructionists, and," he adds, "worse yet, John is willing to name the Logos in the form of flesh."

WHAT McCracken calls the "end of interpretation" is not a void of meaning, but, as in the synoptics, kerygmatic narrative, the purpose of which is "that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and believing, have life in his name." This end is pursued by the author of John using a device through which he attests both to the historicity of the record and to his being an eyewitness to the events he relates.

But he eludes attention of the sort directed at apprehending precisely who he is through the enigmatic figure he calls the "Beloved Disciple." McCracken likens the Beloved Disciple to "the Man in the Mackintosh who wanders through *Ulysses* or the Boy in the Shirt, of Matthew and Mark, who runs away naked when Jesus is arrested." "The enigmatic Beloved Disciple is," McCracken argues, "John's means for effecting the interaction between anecdote, news, or information on the one hand, and myth, Logos, and truth-for-me on the other."

The Beloved Disciple is with Peter in the empty tomb when, seeing only the absence of a body, they believe. He is in the boat with the disciples when Jesus appears and calls them to the lakeside. He comes face to face with Jesus returned from the dead. A rumor concerning the Beloved Disciple is refuted near the conclusion of John when the author insists on literal accuracy. McCracken points out that he carefully distinguishes what Jesus said from what had been rumored in the community. "Jesus did not say that this disciple would not die, but 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?'" Since the sayings and events of the Gospel connect time with the eternity of the Logos, they are to be treated with regard for explicit detail. Their meaning is beyond interpretation.

As in the synoptics, the anecdotes in John are themselves scandalous. After treating his mother much as he treats the Canaanite woman in Matthew, Jesus turns water into wine. Early in John's Gospel, he cleanses the temple, and when he is asked for a sign, having turned over the money-changers' tables, he instead comments cryptically in a way that only obfuscates his purpose. He offends Nicodemus, a teacher [literally, the teacher] of Israel, who comes to him by night. Another Samaritan, the woman at the well, is so confounded by Jesus that she stirs up a whole community of Samaritans who come out to meet the man who told her "everything she ever did." Sayings of the form, "I am the light of the world, I am the vine, I am the way, the truth, and the life," run through the book in resonance with sayings in the synoptics and the "I AM" of the Sinai theophany in the Moses epic. They embody the ultimate scandal: God as flesh.

THE MIRACULOUS feeding of a crowd in the sixth chapter of John leads to the saying, "I am the bread of life." In response to the complaint that he is a mere man, "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know," Jesus utters words that are said to turn back even many of his disciples from following him: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood will live because of me." McCracken's exegesis includes analysis of the Greek text, which, as he demonstrates, reads literally, "He who 'gnaws' on my flesh. . . ." This scandalous metaphor is hard, offensive, and, McCracken argues, uninterpretable.

Using the literary critic's tools to illuminate the Bible as one would Shakespeare or Joyce is an idea whose time has come. Robert Alter's *Art of Biblical Narrative*, an examination of prose conventions in the

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Hebrew Bible, appeared in 1981. McCracken's *Scandal of the Gospels* opens vistas to which historical criticism and theology seem blind because the Gospels themselves defy reduction to historicism or doctrine. One of the postulates of literary theory for McCracken is that story depends on scandal, on the interruption of accepted reality, of what everybody knows. As the Christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries attest, working the scandal of the Gospels into systematic theology is a problem of abstraction for Olympian intellects. The best of them were willing to concede that the Incarnation is a mystery. McCracken's work preserves the offensiveness of the Word made flesh. In the portent or eruption of scandal, a domesticated spirit vanishes. The provocative figure of Jesus appears, his proclamation threatening violence. But, for those who are not offended, the encounter with him opens new terrain accessible to faith.

Race Reconsidered

THE SCAR OF RACE. By PAUL M. SNIDERMAN and THOMAS PIAZZA. *Belknap/Harvard University Press. $18.95.*

Reviewed by **Don Wycliff**

WHEN THE movie *JFK* was released in 1992 amid controversy over its historical accuracy, one commentator, explaining why the film's distortions were so dangerous, pointed out that fully 60 percent of the American people had been born since John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. With no personal memories of the events and personalities to put up against Oliver Stone's rendition of the story, this commentator said, a large and growing majority of the American population stood to have their impressions of a key event in modern American history formed by the conspiratorial prejudices of an ideologically driven moviemaker.

The problem of the dulling and loss of memory with the passage of time is as old as history. (Indeed, it is history's raison d'être.) Recall, for example, Exodus 1:8: "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." We all know what happened next.

The civil rights movement has suffered from this problem since at least the late 1970s, but until recently has either ignored or denied it. Dominated as the movement has been by veterans of the glorious struggles of the early 1960s, it has

DON WYCLIFF *is Editorial Page Editor of the* Chicago Tribune.

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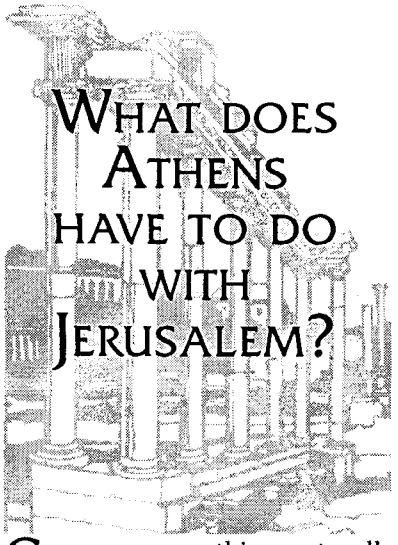

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seemed to be trapped within that decade and has often given the appearance of being on a nostalgia trip, à la *The Big Chill*.

Thus each January 15, Martin Luther King Day, has become an occasion for linking arms at some movement shrine and singing "We Shall Overcome," and some civil rights organization can be depended on to call for a "Marshall Plan for the cities." And so on.

NONE OF THIS is ignoble, just ineffectual. It ignores the fact that in democratic America, a new cohort of kings and queens is born each year, none of whom knows Joseph, much less cares about him. If 60 percent of the population were not yet born when John F. Kennedy was murdered, a scarcely smaller percentage can have been born since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the high water marks of the civil rights movement that together constitute a watershed in America's modern racial history.

The fact is that in 1994 most Americans, black and white, have no personal memories of Bull Connor's police dogs tearing at black flesh; of Freedom Riders with broken limbs and smashed skulls; of Jim Crow and the whole loathsome structure of American apartheid; of Goodman, Chaney, Schwerner, Liuzzo, Reeb, Evers, Till, Parker, and the thousands of other (mostly nameless) victims of American racial terror.

And the fact is, further, that for most white Americans, the term "racial problem" nowadays means news reports about murder, welfare, and social dysfunction in ghettos; about disputes over "quotas" or "guidelines"; about demands for more government services.

IT IS ABOUT this changed reality that Paul M. Sniderman and Thomas Piazza have written in *The Scar of Race*. Their central contention is that the problem of race in America is no longer principally a matter of unreasoned, overwhelming white prejudice against blacks—white racism—but rather is a set of political problems in which prejudice does play some role, but far from the dominant one, and in which political ideology and the perceived self-inflicted injuries of blacks themselves are at least as important.

"Bigotry provides a temptingly simple cause of a complex problem," they write. "It underlines the moral appeal of working to overcome the legacy of slavery and discrimination by fixing attention on the evil originally responsible for it. . . . But to concentrate attention on the deviant and marginal in American life is to miss the larger problem."

To say that racial bigotry has become a "deviant and marginal" element in American life is to say a mouthful. But Sniderman and Piazza offer what they contend is proof, in the form of survey data showing whites markedly less likely nowadays to hold the sort of raw, benighted, unreflectively racist attitudes toward blacks that were the norm a quarter century and more ago.

That is not to say that whites do not hold negative views about blacks. They do, and those views have important social and political implications. So why do Piazza and Sniderman not consider such views—that blacks are more violent than whites, for example, or that blacks, if they would just try harder, could be as well-off as whites—evidence of prejudice and bigotry?

There are two reasons. First, each of the negative characterizations captures in some degree "real features of everyday experience." In other words, according to the authors, there is empirical evidence that blacks are more violent than whites and that blacks do not exert themselves to the degree they should to overcome the disadvantages inflicted by the unique historical injustice from which they suffer.

The second reason, say Sniderman and Piazza, is that blacks themselves are given to the same negative characterizations. Indeed, blacks tend to be even harsher than whites in their judgments. "[W]hen it comes to judgments of whether blacks as a group exhibit socially

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undesirable characteristics, whenever there is a statistically significant difference between the views of blacks and whites, it always takes the form of blacks expressing a more negative evaluation of other blacks than do whites."

Probably the single most potent negative characterization—at least in terms of its effect on whites' willingness to support governmental actions that might benefit blacks—is that blacks just don't try hard enough. "This perception of self-inflicted injuries—injuries inflicted directly or indirectly because of a lack of commitment, effort, and responsibility—is a striking feature of the contemporary picture of blacks held by whites," write the authors.

Even so, they contend, whites show an encouraging ability to distinguish among racial issues and a heartening willingness to support some kinds of governmental assistance for blacks, even as they vehemently oppose other kinds. Items on the "social welfare" agenda (Head Start would be an example) win warm white support, those on the "race-conscious agenda"—i.e., affirmative action—earn overwhelming white opposition, and those on the "equal treatment" agenda—fair housing, for example—fall somewhere in between.

The critical point for Sniderman and Piazza is that, with the exception of affirmative action, whites have not dug in their heels on these questions and can be persuaded. The challenge for proponents of racial justice is to contrive persuasive arguments.

The Scar of Race is honest and accurate—and inadequate. It has long been evident that the nature of the public debate over race in this country needs to change, to become more subtle and respectful of a genuine new reality. And Piazza and Sniderman correctly point out that this change has been stalled, and the resulting debate rendered dishonest and poisoned, by the promiscuous use of the charge of racism.

"For both straightforward and subtle reasons," they observe, "many feel the need to insist that the contemporary conflict over racial policies is still being driven by bigotry, both openly expressed and covert, that white racism remains a dominating force in our culture, that opposition to any policy intended to assist blacks is, in itself, proof of race prejudice. All this is wrong."

Right. And yet . . .

To the ears of a black man—even one who has often lamented the tendency of some other blacks (and not a few whites) to cry "Racism!" at the slightest provocation—the contemporary assertion that "blacks don't try hard enough" doesn't sound that much different from the old racist canard that blacks are by nature "shiftless and lazy." It helps but little to think the matter through and recognize intellectually that the two propositions really are different. It helps but little to recognize, as Sniderman and Piazza correctly assert, that blacks themselves are the harshest judges of their own people. That is a phenomenon not unlike the behavior of a coach who has his own child for a player. The judgment is harsher because the judge is so deeply, personally invested in the situation.

The fact is that for a black person it is always troubling when whites as a group make negative judgments about blacks as a group. Because while such judgments may today seem harmless enough, they may tomorrow become poisonous and prejudicial. All the more so since race is not one of those areas of our national life in which Americans customarily behave like dispassionate logicians.

And that gets to the fundamental reason for the judgment of inadequacy. Piazza and Sniderman no doubt are sincere in their belief that their surveys and analyses have uncovered the truth about contemporary white racial attitudes. Given

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the severely abraded state of American race relations at this moment, however, that belief strikes this observer as incredibly naive.

LOOK AT the news. A national restaurant chain has just settled a lawsuit charging wholesale and apparently systematic discrimination against black customers. The shock waves from Colin Ferguson's Long Island Rail Road rampage have still not subsided. Every day brings word of some new outrage—either white against black or vice versa.

In such circumstances, it is understandably difficult for an aware reader to buy into the proposition—regression analyses, margins of error, and other statistical devices notwithstanding—that most whites are simply available to be persuaded to adopt more social agenda programs for the benefit of blacks.

All the more so since affirmative action remains such a powerful source of irritation to whites in the society. One would hardly guess, to read some commentators, that there had in effect been a longstanding affirmative action program for white men in this country until about a quarter of a century ago. (What else can one fairly call a system from which nonwhites had been largely excluded?)

But it is not fair to saddle Sniderman and Piazza with the duty of refuting intuitions inspired by the daily news. They have done some solid, provocative social science and produced a volume that deserves to be widely read and carefully considered. And if, despite pessimistic intuitions, they are right, *The Scar of Race* could be evidence of a deep social wound on the way to healing.

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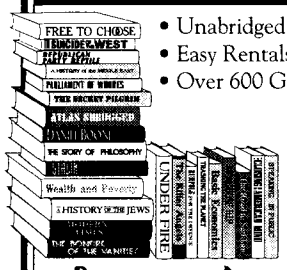

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A History of Hades

THE FORMATION OF HELL. By ALAN E. BERNSTEIN. *Cornell University Press. 392 pp. $32.50.*

Reviewed by **Jerry L. Walls**

THE AUTHOR of this book did not intend to write it. Originally this material was supposed to be merely an introductory section of a one-volume history of hell in the Middle Ages. But his fascination with a collection of literature that was both richer and more abundant than expected led him to a larger project. Thus, the present work is just the first installment of what is to be a multivolume history of hell from the Bible to Dante.

Bernstein emphasizes at the outset that he is concerned neither to defend nor to attack the notion of hell, and he claims no prior assumptions about its nature, value, or reality. His purposes are purely historical, and he aims to reach conclusions that can be verified by a close reading of the relevant texts.

Bernstein's story begins with an introductory chapter on the afterlife in ancient Babylonia and Egypt. Neither the authors of the New Testament nor later Christian apologists lived in a vacuum, and Bernstein stresses that we cannot have a correct understanding of hell unless we take into account the conceptual background of the world in which Christianity arose. This chapter sounds some of the main themes that are developed more fully in the four main parts of the book. One such theme is the distinction between "neutral" death and "moral" death. The first notion appears in written records from Mesopotamia by the middle of the third millennium B.C. According to this view, "the dead survive en masse in a pallid half-life without either reward or punishment." On the other hand, the moral view of death is registered in Egyptian texts by the middle of the second millennium B.C. This view, which later informed ancient Greek culture, maintains that "the dead are judged by the standard of known criteria and then rewarded or punished." This later view of death is, of course, particularly relevant to the doctrine of hell since hell involves some form of punishment.

IN PART ONE of the book, which deals with "The Netherworlds of Greece and Rome," Bernstein gives us a detailed discussion of these two views of death as reflected in such authors as Homer, Virgil, Plato, and Plutarch. It is noteworthy that so-called "neutral" death is not always strictly neutral. For instance, one of Homer's characters experiences the

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continuance of a painful emotion he felt at the time of his death; some are depicted as feeling pride in the accomplishments of their progeny, while others experience shame.

A particularly interesting account of moral death is drawn from some of Plato's dialogues. He tells of four possible fates ranging from that of the holy to that of the incurably wicked. While the former receive eternal rewards, the latter are cast into Tartarus where they are punished eternally. Between these extremes are those of indeterminate character and those who have committed sins that are curable. The Christian reader will immediately see here certain parallels to heaven, hell, and purgatory.

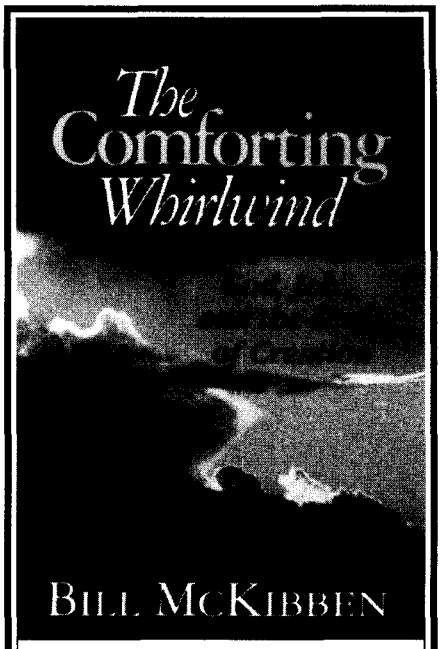
Other chapters in Part One deal with "Porous Death" and "Useful Death." In the first of these, Bernstein cites numerous accounts of interaction between the living and the dead which illustrate that for the ancient Greeks and Romans the boundary of death was not always distinct. "The dead were neither as fully dead nor as fully alive as the living might wish." The chapter on useful death is a fascinating discussion of different ancient opinions about the social utility of various views of death. Threats of eternal punishment and promise of reward were often seen as a positive reinforcement of moral behavior and a support for a stable society.

The second part of the book covers the other major source of background material for the Christian concept of hell, namely, the Jewish tradition. The story Bernstein tells here will be familiar to students of Scripture. The possibility of divine punishment is rooted in the covenant God initiated with the Jews, which promises not only rewards for obedience, but also punishment for disobedience. In the Deuteronomic model, however, these consequences are very much confined to this world. Destruction is the ultimate penalty and *sheol* is morally neutral. It was dissatisfaction with the Deuteronomic model that was the first stimulus to the doctrine of hell. Increasing awareness of the injustices of this life led to calls for moral death, of which the book of Job is a particularly eloquent expression. "The key to Job's despair is his realization that not even death provides escape from life's injustice."

Some early Hebrew expressions of moral death occur in passages such as Ezekiel 32 and Isaiah 14. Here we see the wicked experiencing both shame and segregation in *sheol*, a combination that represents the earliest reference in the Bible to what would come to be known as hell. And later there are references to a double resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked after which the wicked would be punished. The symmetry of this description would be an important theme in subsequent Jewish and Christian writings where eternal punishment is explicitly articulated. Bernstein makes clear, however, that the notion of postmortem punishment is a late concern in Hebrew thought and is only a minority position.

In the third part of the book Bernstein makes the case that there is similar diversity in the New Testament. Following some recent trends in New Testament scholarship, he argues that Paul did not have a clear concept of hell. Paul never mentions *gehenna* and his only reference to *hades* celebrates its defeat. He is notably reserved when speaking of the wicked and refrains from characterizing their fate in parallel fashion with that of those who receive eternal life. Although Paul was attracted to universalism, Bernstein maintains that in the end the Apostle opts for the view that the wicked will be annihilated. On the other hand, the symmetrical position with eternal punishment as the alternative to eternal life appears clearly in the Gospels and Revelation.

The fourth part of the book is an intriguing discussion of how these options played out in the early centuries of Christian theology through the time of Augustine. At one end of the spectrum, eternal punishment was elaborated with much more de-



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tail, imagination, and color than appears in the biblical text; at the other end, universal salvation was defended with philosophical sophistication by Origen. Stopping short of universalism, the *Apocalypse of Paul* depicts God as extending mercy to the damned by allowing them periodic relief from their suffering. And over against all of these, Augustine articulated his conception of eternal damnation, which would prove to be highly influential in Western theology.

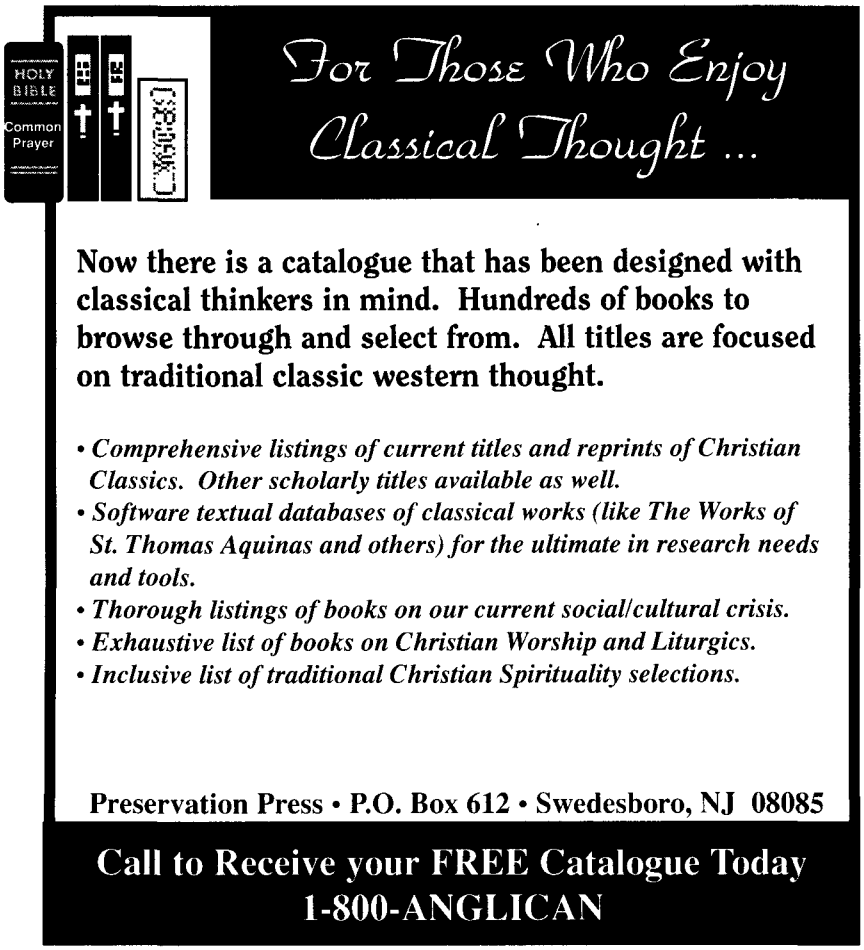
THE STORY Bernstein tells is an interesting one, and he does an excellent job of telling it clearly despite the considerable complexity of his subject matter. This is fortunate, since the story is not merely a matter of historical concern. Indeed, this material is highly relevant to a lively debate on hell currently being waged among theologians and philosophers. Traditional views of hell are again receiving serious attention, and the discussion is being further stimulated by the fact that even in conservative Christian circles the options of universalism and annihilationism are attracting a growing number of adherents. All who are involved in this debate would profit from Bernstein's informative work.

Precisely because of such theological relevance, however, one might raise a question or two. In particular, I would challenge Bernstein's claim to have written a purely historical work devoid of theological judgment. Ironically, the doubtful nature of this claim appears in some of the very passages where he aims to distance himself from theology. For instance, consider his comment on Isaiah 66:18-20, an admittedly difficult and paradoxical passage. Bernstein insists that we should not try to achieve a synthesis or explain the paradox. "To interpret this passage further would be to theologize and to insist on a more systematic statement than actually exists." I would suggest that when someone draws lines for legitimate interpretation of a biblical text he is theologizing, whether he owns it or not.

A similar point applies to Bernstein's treatment of the diversity he details in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. With respect to the variety in the Old Testament, he offers the following advice: "Rather than theological consistency in Scripture, it is better to search instead for the conflicts of opinion that energized religious life and existential feeling about God, oneself, and the world." Likewise, he remarks that to reconcile the passages of the New Testament with one another is to write theology. "By contrast, looking 'in the other direction,' at its underlying perception, the existential aspiration for justice which these texts seek to articulate shows how they reflect different aspects of a broader vision that informs them all."

The preference to leave the diversity as it stands rather than to seek a synthesis or some other interpretation that would achieve consistency is hardly theologically neutral. Those who look for theological consistency on these matters typically do so because they believe Scripture is a revelation from God and that what it teaches about the afterlife is true. The recommendation that we should seek conflicts of opinion rather than a fundamental consistency is easily read as an implicit claim that Scripture is only a collection of various fallible human perspectives rather than truth from God revealed to us. At any rate, such a recommendation is surely not a merely historical claim, innocent of theological insinuation.

IT SHOULD ALSO be emphasized that Bernstein suggests his own account of the unity underlying the diversity of the texts, namely, the "existential aspiration for justice which these texts seek to articulate." Elsewhere, he explains this aspiration in more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psychological terms: "Belief in future punishment is a manifestation of the sublimated desire for vengeance. Belief in punishment after death becomes necessary when no sign of restoration is visible in this life."

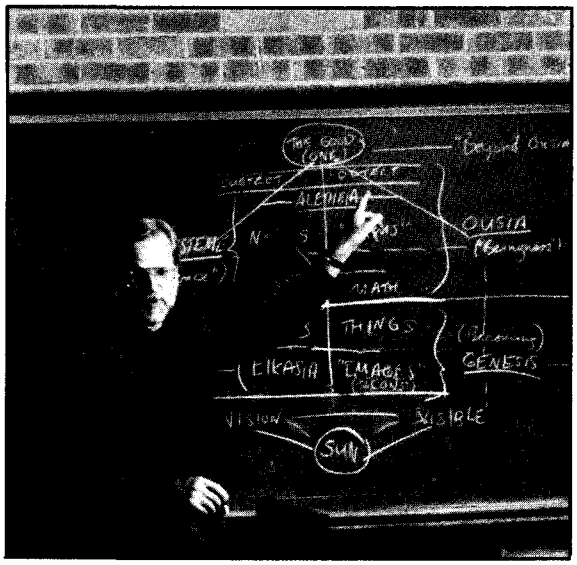
Bernstein gives this suggestion a utilitarian twist in his discussion of how the restraint of Paul gave way in later New Testament writings to the explicit teaching of eternal punishment: "My hypothesis is that postmortem sanctions became more dire as internal sanctions because more necessary. Between 1 Thessalonians and Revelation, the church came to be in need of an avenger, whether against wayward members or outside oppressors." This construal of hell is reminiscent of Bernstein's discussion of "Useful Death" among the ancient Greeks and Romans. There are, of course, differences, but the idea that the threat of hell served as a moral sanction in the Christian community is surely an example of hell playing a useful role. The similarity is noteworthy because in his earlier chapter Bernstein maintained that the utilitarian approach to death is absent from early Jewish and Christian literature.

As Bernstein sees it, then, the doctrine of hell is primarily a logical implication of believing in a just God in the face of obvious injustice in this life. The doctrine also has existential and psychological roots insofar as it arises from a sublimated desire for vengeance and even makes a nod to utility to the degree that its development was spurred on by the exigencies of persecution and the need for discipline in the early church.

This history of hell is not necessarily incompatible with the belief that the Christian doctrine of hell is actually true. But some of its conclusions do raise questions about the credibility of the doctrine. For instance, if belief in hell does indeed spring from a suppressed desire for revenge, the belief has suspicious roots. Those who believe the doctrine is true would insist that Jesus' teaching on hell, as recorded by the New Testament authors, did not arise from a sublimated desire for revenge, but rather came to us as part of the highest revelation of a loving God.

Bernstein would likely see such a suggestion as an obvious move from the province of the historian to that of the theologian. I have been arguing, however, that Bernstein's history itself crosses this boundary.

Clearly, the distinctions between history, theology, and metaphysics are neither simple nor uncontroversial. It is not obvious that those who write history in terms of human motives, aspirations, intentions, and intellectual development are writing



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pure history over against those who believe God is the central agent of history and that his activity, intentions, and revelation are the key to understanding the literature of Judaism, and ultimately Christianity. Neither of these can rightly claim metaphysical or theological neutrality. And neither of these approaches, when dealing with a subject like hell, is indifferent with respect to its credibility or reality.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THICK AND THIN: MORAL ARGUMENT AT HOME AND ABROAD. By MICHAEL WALZER. *University of Notre Dame Press. 105 pp. $16.95.*

The author of *Spheres of Justice* and *The Company of Critics* considers the problem of distributive justice after the collapse of the Communist states in 1989. "This new world is marked by the collapse of the totalitarian project—and by a pervasive, at least ostensible, commitment to democratic government and an equally pervasive, and more actual, commitment to cultural autonomy and national independence." Walzer points out that it was one thing to have a critique of Communist tyranny, but it is quite another thing to reform or reconstruct a society from the inside. Although we can recognize gross violations of justice (e.g., the appearance of secret police in the middle of the night), social criticism in detail can come only from inside a maximalist morality: a morality "idiomatic in its language, particularist in its cultural reference, and circumstantial in the two senses of that word: historically dependent and factually detailed." Walzer does not deny the truth and value of minimalist principles of justice. Such social criticism is useful for subverting injustice when it is writ large; it is also useful for transcultural solidarity with different peoples and cultures. But the detailed criticism of a social order will have to be homegrown. Walzer notes that "the left has never understood the tribes." "Tribalism," as he defines it, is "the commitment of individuals and groups to their own history, culture, and identity, and this commitment (though not any particular version of it) is a permanent feature of human social life." He adds that the moral thickness that it breeds "is similarly permanent." The liberal political cultures of the West must recognize that their commitment to individual autonomy and equality of opportunity expresses a homegrown maximalist morality of justice, and should not be imperially imposed upon all peoples. Political judgments require prudence, and cannot be collapsed into general moral principles. In refusing to impose the details of justice from afar the liberal political cultures would not be abandoning principles, for "self-determination" in the political sense is not just a principle of modern democracy. Self-determination represents a nearly universal political and cultural aspiration.

— Russell Hittinger

THE KINGDOM OF MATTHIAS. By PAUL E. JOHNSON and SEAN WILENTZ. *Oxford University Press. 223 pp. $25.*

The subtitle is "A Story of Sex and Salvation in Nineteenth Century America" and, given the potential for sensationalism, this is a telling by two historians who are sober, sympathetic, and engaging. The story is rather simple. In the 1830s, when the Second Great Awakening was well under way, a deranged (today we might say charismatic) fellow named Robert Matthews declared himself to be, among other things, the reincarnation of the apostle Matthias. He enlisted some well-intended evangelical businessmen of New York in establishing his "kingdom" on one of

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their estates at Sing Sing on the Hudson River. There Matthias reigned for a brief time as absolute dictator, controlling also the sexual pairings of his handful of followers. He possibly was complicit in the death of one of them, and was, after a fumbled trial, thoroughly discredited and driven out West where he died, no one knows quite when or where. It is a slight story, made perhaps somewhat more significant by the authors' revelation in the very last sentence that the strange ex-slave who was Matthias' servant came to be known by history as Sojourner Truth. The authors usefully highlight the ways in which the evangelical fervor of the nineteenth century gave women considerably expanded space for social leadership, and they view people such as Matthews and Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, as reacting, at least in significant part, to this challenge to patriarchy. In his dust-jacket recommendation, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. says this book "opens up a chilling vein of continuity in the American religious experience." Nonsense. Whatever a "chilling vein" might be, *The Kingdom of Matthias* is a pleasantly readable tale of a minor spasm of fanaticism at the farthest margins of the American religious experience.

— *Janet Marsden*

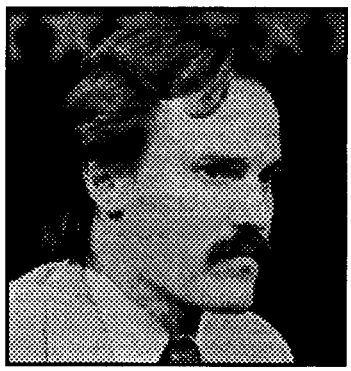
GOD'S PLAGIARIST: BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE FABULOUS INDUSTRY AND IRREGULAR COMMERCE OF THE ABBÉ MIGNE. By R. HOWARD BLOCH. *University of Chicago Press. 152 pp. $24.95.*

If footnotes may be said to grant a kind of immortality, however faint, then surely the great Abbé Migne must be called the "President of the Immortals." This was Thomas Hardy's appellation for God, but in Footnote Heaven the moniker ought really to belong to Jacques-Paul Migne, the nineteenth-century Benedictine who singlehandedly edited and published the entire corpus of the Greek and Latin Fathers and whose edition is cited in almost every work on early Christianity ever published. The man was indeed remarkable, a kind of Joe Fessio cubed, then squared. Realizing early on that the Catholic Church would be ill-served in the coming battles with secularism without an ability to draw on her own best treasures, Migne devised the scheme of publishing, in uniform format, the entire extant corpus of early Christian literature, much of which was still in manuscript. To make such a prodigious venture a going operation, Migne devised a kind of clerical "Book-of-the-Every-Other-Month Club," in which the French clergy were encouraged through the Catholic press to subscribe to each volume as it came off the presses. Moreover, Migne was also instrumental in setting up a series of clerical newsletters and journals, where his project in patristics was sure to draw a great deal of free publicity. Bloch affects to find all of this industry (in both senses of the word) faintly distasteful, without ever exactly specifying why. This book, otherwise a fascinating account of a fascinating man, rather reminds me of how an anti-Catholic accountant would react upon discovering, to his dismay, that the Vatican Bank is solvent. The story of this great man is endlessly interesting—and one even detects a closet admiration for the man by his biographer. But this is still one of those peculiar muckraking books that can find no muck to rake.

— *Edward T. Oakes, S.J.*

BEYOND CULTURE WARS. By MICHAEL S. HORTON. *Moody Press. 284 pp. $16.99.*

The author heads a California group called Christians United for Reformation (CURE) and his thesis, aimed especially at politicized evangelicals, is that Christians must choose between viewing America as a battlefield or a mission field. Those who make the latter choice, argues Horton, are likely to produce better results also in terms of cultural change than are Christians who



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take the culture wars as their primary task. Regrettably, Horton's idea of "Christians United" appears to be limited to Christians who subscribe to his rather strident Reformed view of Protestant orthodoxy. For such Christians, nonetheless, *Beyond Culture Wars* is a salutary warning against what Jacques Ellul called "the political illusion."

THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH. By RAYMOND E. BROWN. *Doubleday. Two volumes. 1608 pp. Boxed set $75.*

Brown is one of those rare biblical scholars who can use critical methodology in a manner that enhances the spiritual reading and homiletical use of the text. It is fair to say that a great deal of Christian preaching, and not only at Christmas, has been powerfully influenced by Brown's earlier (1977) *The Birth of the Messiah,* and it is possible this new work will make no less an impact. The author is especially strong in distinguishing the different arguments implied by the variations in the four gospel narratives, and where pertinent he notes the contrasts with extra-canonical literature. While Father Brown nowhere challenges classical Christian teaching regarding the suffering and death of Christ, he is theologically abstemious to a fault. As with Sergeant Friday, it's "Just the facts, ma'am." Many readers may be disappointed that Brown so cautiously stops short of the resurrection accounts. Even within the narrow confines of historical methodology as construed by the author, it should be possible to offer something more than silence on the event (however understood) without which the gospels would certainly not have been written in the first place. That being said, *The Death of the Messiah* is rightly acclaimed as an extraordinarily ambitious work that will have an important place in academic biblical studies, and will be welcomed by many who are called to proclaim the Word.

THE LAST TRIAL. By SHALOM SPIEGEL. *Jewish Lights Publishing. 167 pp. $17.95.*

Originally published in 1950, this classic work reviews and analyzes a wealth of Jewish sources, as the book's subtitle indicates, "On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: *The Akedah.*" These fascinating materials on a pivotal event in the religious and literary imagination of Western civilization had never before been translated into English and brought together in a single book. The current reprint is by Jewish Lights Publishing, whose small but growing list includes mainly contemporary inspirational works—by such as Lawrence Kusher and Jeffrey Salkind—as well as classic reprints (e.g., Solomon Schecter's *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*). A catalogue is available from Jewish Lights Publishing, Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091; 1-800-962-4544.

CONSULTING THE FAITHFUL: WHAT CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS CAN LEARN FROM POPULAR RELIGION. By RICHARD J. MOUW. *Eerdmans. 96 pp. $6.99 paper.*

The title, of course, is from John Henry Cardinal Newman, and Mouw, who is President of the evangelical Fuller Seminary in California, has written a delightful and important book that might fairly be described as Newmanesque in spirit. Although winsomely expressed, *Consulting the Faithful* is a polemic against intellectuals (theologians in particular) who exhibit a practiced disdain for the "tackiness" of popular religion. It is easy and finally cheap for the theologically trained to expose the fatuities and incoherences in the ways that ordinary folk understand what it means to be Christian. It is also, says Mouw, unloving and unproductive. In viewing popular religion, he urges that we replace a hermeneutics of suspicion with a hermeneutics of charity. While wanting to maintain the "high theology" of his Calvinism, Mouw insists that the great need is to nurture a "theology for everyday life," and toward that end he suggests that respectful attention be paid the religiously unsophisticated who, in fact, may be a good deal more spiritually sophisticated

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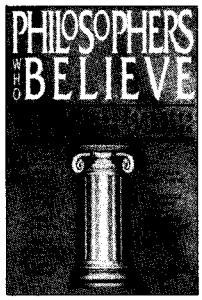

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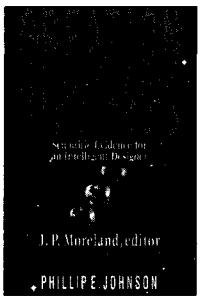

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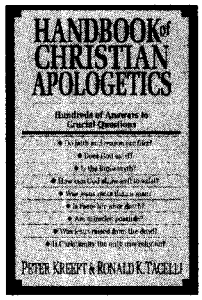

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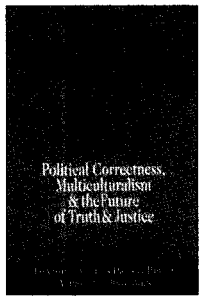

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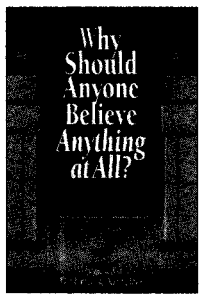

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than their academic and clerical betters. When asked whether there was a place for the laity in the Church, Newman replied that we (meaning clerics and theologians) would look pretty silly without them. Mouw obviously agrees. Not least of the merits of *Consulting the Faithful* is its evidence of Protestant openness to patterns of piety usually associated with Roman Catholicism. In this respect the book provides further support for the much-discussed convergence between evangelical Protestants and Catholics. Although the book is written in a manner entirely accessible to the nonspecialist, one hopes that theologians and professional students of religion will pay particular attention to Mouw's argument.

STRANGER AT THE GATE: TO BE GAY AND CHRISTIAN IN AMERICA. By MEL WHITE. *Simon and Schuster. 333 pp. $23.*

In a now familiar genre that combines heavy doses of self-pity with unbridled polemic against an allegedly homophobic society and church, Mel White, an evangelical Protestant who now works with a gay church in Dallas, capitalizes on his brush with fame as ghostwriter to the likes of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. Working under what he acknowledges were false pretenses, he was a well-paid writer for the religious right until the end of 1991 when he decided to tell the world that those whom he had served for decades are in fact promoting a program comparable to that of Hitler and the Third Reich. The repeated comparison between the Holocaust and the prejudice experienced by homosexuals is one of the more hysterical aspects of this hysterical book. Along the way, White offers the usual précis of John Boswell's discredited account of Christian attitudes toward homosexuality, and even includes his own letters to Christian notables, including John Paul II, urging them to come to terms with the "latest insights" regarding the moral goodness of the gay life. The reader is left puzzled as to why this sad, dishonest, and frequently vicious book is recommended by evangelical writers Lewis Smedes and Phil Yancey. The author says they are his friends, which is commendable, but friendship does not explain promoting a book that can only exacerbate the problems of Christians trying to attain moral clarity about human sexuality.

GLASTONBURY. By DONNA FLETCHER CROW. *Crossway. 859 pp. $17.99 paper.*

Subtitled "The Novel of Christian England," this is a really big read, and a good one. Glastonbury Abbey in the South of England is, according to legend, the center of a Christian presence in that island for two thousand years. Joseph of Arimathea is said to have come there, bringing with him, on one visit, the child Jesus. The sweep is from the first Christian encounter with the Druids to the Catholic dissolution perpetrated by Henry VIII. Ms. Crow's manner is inviting and leisurely, offering the reader a pleasurable education in the history of England and, more important, in the many ways that people over the centuries have understood what it means to be Christian.

BATTLING FOR THE MODERN MIND: A BEGINNER'S CHESTERTON. By THOMAS C. PETERS. *Concordia. 172 pp. $15.95.*

If memory serves, it was E. M. Forster who said that there are two kinds of people in the world—the people who say there are two kinds of people in the world and the people who don't say that. There are two kinds of people in the world—the people who love G. K. Chesterton and the people who hate him. More precisely, there is a third kind and this book is for them—the people who don't know Chesterton. Of course the book will also be bought by, and greatly enjoyed by, the people who love GKC. They can never get enough of him. It is a wondrous book, a marvelous celebration of a man who never wearied of celebrating the wonder and marvel of a world illumined by Christian orthodoxy. So now you know to which of the above categories this scribbler of briefly noteds belongs.

THE CULTURE OF CITIZENSHIP: INVENTING POSTMODERN CIVIC CULTURE. By THOMAS BRIDGES. *SUNY Press. 267 pp. $14.95.*

An extended reflection on the possibility of taking the kind of theory associated with John Rawls and fleshing it out with great respect for history, experience, and communal context. Religion, and Christian communities in particular, can and should, says the author, model the civic culture for which he hopes—a culture that will retrieve and rehabilitate the best of the liberal Enlightenment tradition.

THE GLORY OF CHRISTENDOM. By WARREN H. CARROLL. *Christendom Press (Front Royal, VA). 774 pp. $19.95 paper.*

The third in a projected seven-volume history of Christendom, this one covers the period from 1100 to 1517. This is history written, exultantly, from the top down, with the papacy unquestioningly at the center. Catholic history with all flags unfurled, what it may sacrifice in critical nuance it gains in coherence of story line. Carroll, the founding president of Christendom College, carries his readers along in a confident narrative sweep.

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A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Truth and Tolerance

"Tolerance is not a religious virtue," a feisty rabbi friend is fond of declaring in public, gleefully scandalizing the properly liberal in his audience. Truth, not tolerance, he goes on to say, is what religion is about. None of us should want to dispute that religion, at least biblical religion, is about truth. And there may be a pedagogical shock value in challenging our liberal culture's uncritical attachment to tolerance. But in our more serious moments we are compelled to recognize that an awful lot turns on whether we think there is a tradeoff between truth and tolerance. Historically and at present, many (most?) religious folk have assumed that there is such a tradeoff. Forced to make a choice, the militantly orthodox opt for truth at the expense of tolerance, while the flaccidly liberal opt for tolerance at the expense of truth. Dissenting from this view of the matter, some of us have been arguing for a long time that truth and tolerance go together, and necessarily so. Put differently, it is Christian truth that makes tolerance imperative.

These reflections are prompted by a remarkable new book by a young Englishman who teaches theology at the University of Exeter. His name is Ian S. Markham and the book is titled *Plurality and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, $30). Markham's argument has many parts, and following it requires close attention even by the theologically and philosophically trained, but it richly rewards the effort. In summary form, Markham is making two claims, one philosophical and the other historical. They are admittedly very big claims, which is why he devotes an entire book to defending them. Markham also knows that his claims run counter to conventional wisdoms about tolerance and truth, which is why he attends so carefully to the arguments of his opponents.

The philosophical claim is this:

> [T]he contemporary threats to plurality do not come from religion but from secularism. The secularist, who has given up the quest for truth and therefore moral debate and rational dialogue, is the greater danger to tolerance. A religious foundation for tolerance is grounded in the reality of God that ensures the intelligibility of the universe. This foundation is the only effective antidote to secular reason, which cannot avoid the dangers of nihilism. Truth claims depend upon the conviction that the universe is intelligible, and that in turn depends upon belief in God.

And the historical claim is this:

> [T]he United States has made a cultural discovery. It has found good religious reasons why we ought to affirm plurality. The British [and European] debate about plurality is still firmly rooted within the confines of premodernity and modernity. However, the nation of immigrants was forced, right from the start, to engage with plurality. And slowly a culture emerged that was both religious and tolerant. This led some to suggest that America had created a new religion—civil religion; but in fact Christians, Jews, and Muslims were discovering the importance of plurality. . . . In this sense, Americans are postmodern.

Do not be distracted by Markham's use of "plurality." He avoids "pluralism" because that term is associated with another set of arguments in the United Kingdom. By plurality he means what most of us call pluralism—a society in which people who subscribe to quite different accounts of reality, including moral and religious reality, are thrown together and must decide what to do about it. It is the very considerable achievement of modernity that people decided that the thing to do is to be tolerant. It is the very considerable problem of modernity that tolerance is often purchased at the price of denying

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the differences, including the differences that make the most difference, such as differences over what people believe to be most importantly true.

The Courage of His Conclusions

At this point I must declare interest, as the lawyers say. *Plurality and Christian Ethics* is in large part a sympathetic analysis of my own writings on questions related to religion and public life, moral legitimacy and democratic governance. With few exceptions, Markham has my argument right, and an author is of course grateful for that. He very usefully pieces that argument together as it has developed over—it hardly seems possible—almost thirty years. The important contribution of the book, however, is that it places the American experience and arguments about that experience into a much larger historical and transcultural context. Unlike so many scholars who timorously trim and equivocate lest they step on toes in their academic guild, Markham typically exhibits the courage of his conclusions. Here he is at his most forthright; some will call it grandiose, others will call it daring; the pertinent question is whether it is true:

> It is given to certain cultures at certain times to discover a different way of understanding their religious tradition. Often the discovery is embedded in existing beliefs; sometimes it is a distinctive innovation. More often than not it is a combination of the two. The discovery, if it survives, becomes so "obvious" that people wonder why it was not discovered before. It was given to the eighth century B.C.E. prophets of Israel to discover the high moral standards God expects of his people. It was given to medieval Europe to experience the all-pervasive influence of the Christian narrative, thereby showing the way in which everything we value can be understood. It was given to the Reformers to discover the democratic implications of the gospel. And now I have shown it has been given to the Americans to discover a religious affirmation of plurality.

One may at first be staggered by the suggestion that the "American discovery" is somehow comparable in historical importance to Sinai, the creation of Christendom, and the Reformation. But careful attention to the supporting argument makes it clear that Markham's claim, while certainly controversial, is not an indulgence in reckless hyperbole. The argument, to paraphrase it all too briefly, runs like this. In the modern era, tolerance has been the trump card in the secularists' construction of what has been called the naked public square. After the wars of religion in seventeenth-century Europe, sensible thinkers concluded that religion is inherently divisive and destructive of civil society. The antireligious set out to destroy religion; the more devout agreed to confine their religion to the private sphere; many others simply expected that religion would wither away as people became more "enlightened." Tolerance was necessary to civil peace, and religion was the chief threat to tolerance. In this account, tolerance is a secular achievement won at great cost in a battle against religion. This secular narrative of the history of tolerance, Markham recognizes, has a good deal of truth to it.

But a number of funny things have happened on the way to the end of the twentieth century. For one, secular tolerance has become profoundly intolerant. For another, there is widespread agreement today, also among secular liberals, that secular liberalism cannot provide a convincing philosophical defense of the tolerance that was once the great achievement of secular liberalism. The truth about tolerance is that tolerance requires truth. But, as Markham demonstrates with impressive erudition and panache, from Hume to Kant to Nietzsche to Richard Rorty, modernity has ineluctably corroded intellectual confidence in the possibility of truth. In his extensive and intriguing discussion of Alasdair MacIntyre, John Milbank, Jeffrey Stout, and others, Markham obviously agrees that a historically specifiable tradition of secular rationality has come to an intellectual dead end. With MacIntyre in particular, he champions a rival tradition that draws significantly on Thomas Aquinas, and this alternative Markham typically calls theism.

The discussion of current philosophical disputes constitutes a monograph within this small book of only 225 pages. But it is a necessary discussion, and one filled with frequent juxtapositions that sharply pose what is at stake. This, for example, on Jeffrey Stout's insistence that the threat of public religion still makes necessary a dogmatically secular practice of tolerance, even if that practice cannot be philosophically defended: "Stout wants to resist religious solutions because he does not trust religion. He wants to affirm liberalism because he wants to affirm tolerance. Much of his argument would crumble if it could be shown that a religious culture can also be a tolerant culture. Such a demonstration is the object of this book." At times Markham suggests a stronger form of the argument: not only can a religious culture be tolerant, but *only* a religious culture can give a convincing reason for being tolerant.

Rational Theism

A religious culture is one pervasively influenced by theism understood in rather broad terms, and in terms that, Markham insists, are rationally justified. In this connection he develops his own version of Aquinas' argument from necessary cause, and

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sharply distinguishes theism from the deism of rationalists who posit a God who kicks things off and then steps back to watch the world machine work of itself. Against currently popular attitudes, he insists that the question of God's existence is not an "interesting question" comparable to the "interesting question" of whether there might be a Loch Ness monster. "Religion is a life-transforming world perspective which affects every aspect of life. For the naturalist, the universe is an inanimate entity that through remarkable chance has generated mind and consciousness. All moral values are culture projection. The main theistic claim is the opposite: at the heart of the universe is goodness and love enabling all to be. This is what we mean by God." In an aside that begs to be developed, he notes that recognition of this goodness and love leads to wonder and worship, and that the nature of worship necessarily tends to monotheism (even in Hinduism where many gods and goddesses are expressions of the one—Brahman). You can reverence many gods and goddesses, but you can only *worship* one God.

The more orthodox Christian or Jew might be dissatisfied with Markham's generalized theism, especially since it seems not entirely consonant with his assertion that it is orthodox or conservative religion that provides the most secure foundation for tolerance. On the other hand, Markham might contend that, if even such a generalized theism provides a basis for a coherent argument in defense of tolerance, religion with a fuller and more specific content provides an even firmer basis. Suffice it that Markham's theological program, as distinct from his philosophical program, is underdeveloped in this book. God willing, he will have opportunities to develop that. Develop it he must, if he is to be faithful to his own understanding of the task of the Christian ethicist. The modern Christian thinkers whom he admires (Reinhold Niebuhr being the foremost example) are those who are able, as Markham puts it, to work in "three modes of enquiry"—the theological, the cultural, and the practical.

In addition to the very effective philosophical polemic against naturalism and in addition to his apology for theism, the reader is struck by the close attention to the cultural and practical. Markham is alert to historical contingency without being historicist. In his view, God is still up to things; the human project is by no means finished; history is susceptible to transformative "discoveries"—such as the religious affirmation of pluralism. The "secular narrative" of how tolerance was achieved and pluralism affirmed despite religion and against religion was, Markham recognizes, losing its credibility for some thinkers already in the early part of this century. It does not diminish MacIntyre's achievement to note that long before he came on the scene there were Christian intellectuals who challenged the secular Enlightenment's claim that it represents a tradition-transcending rationality. They recognized that Enlightenment rationalism was one tradition among others, and that it was a tradition that had become increasingly oppressive as it became decreasingly plausible.

Arguments Compared

In the 1920s in Great Britain these figures converged in what came to be called the Christendom Group. John Bailey, J. L. Oldham, A. Vidler, and R. H. Tawney were among the more prominent members. V. A. Demant was the group's most prolific and representative writer, although T. S. Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* is perhaps the only book from the movement that is still read today. Markham loosely structures his own book around the comparison between the Christendom Group and "the American discovery." In Markham's presentation of the argument, the contemporary representatives of the American discovery are Robert Bellah and the present writer. What all these people have in common, to put it in summary fashion, is the belief that secular rationalism had demonstrated itself to be intellectually unconvincing and culturally destructive. Demant and the Christendom Group tended to the view that modernity itself was a ghastly mistake. They are, says Markham, "premoderns" who wanted to reconstitute a more coherent Christian world. For them, pluralism and tolerance were the problem created by modernity, not the achievement of modernity. In a word, the Christendom Group rejected pluralism in favor of monism.

For Bellah and Neuhaus, on the other hand, pluralism and tolerance are achievements of modernity. Even if they were, in specific historical conflicts, achieved against religion, they can be and should be affirmed by religion. The most important difference between Bellah and Neuhaus, as Markham tells it, is that Bellah thinks such an affirmation requires a "civil religion" or national "covenant." Neuhaus contends that such an affirmation can be produced from the resources of biblical faith, resulting in a religiously informed "public philosophy" that can support a free and democratic social order. Markham has a two-page spread in which he offers a typology of the different theological, cultural, and practical positions of the Christendom Group (Demant), Civil Religion (Bellah), and Public Philosophy (Neuhaus). On the key question of tolerance, for Demant tolerance is a problem of liberalism, for Bellah it is an important social value, and for Neuhaus it is a practice based on a religious insight into how the world really is. Incidentally, in his typology Markham is right, I believe, in noting an important affinity between Bellah and the Christendom Group; both are antimodern in their hostility to democratic capitalism and attraction to various socialist

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proposals for a more "communitarian" economic and social order.

I cannot speak for the Christendom Group, most of whom are dead, nor for Robert Bellah, who is very much alive, but I have no major complaints about Markham's depiction of my own argument. I do have some major questions, however. They are friendly questions. Whether or not he has made his case convincingly on every front, I believe that Markham is entirely right about his central thesis. The cultural dominance of secularism depends upon the believability of the claim that religion and religiously grounded moral judgment are inherently intolerant. In the thoroughly secularist regime, this is extended to the claim that it is not possible to give any account of the moral good in public because there is and can be no agreement about moral truth. This, in turn, is extended to the claim that there is no such thing as moral truth, and indeed no such thing as truth—at least not in any publicly pertinent sense of the word.

For many of our contemporaries, that is where the argument has come to rest. In a manner that is deservedly called brilliant, Ian Markham argues that this view of things is both irrational and destructive of civil society. He correctly sees that the linchpin of the secularist worldview is the contention that religion, because of its claims to truth, is inherently intolerant. Remove that linchpin and the dogmas of secularism collapse. That linchpin is removed by demonstrating that it is precisely a truth claim of religion that tolerance is not only possible but imperative. The "American discovery" is such a demonstration. QED.

Five Questions

I mention but five questions that suggest the demonstration is not quite so decisive as Markham indicates. He has good discussions of other Christian thinkers who have wrestled with the problem of truth and tolerance—Augustine and Thomas being the outstanding instances—but I am not sure that he is entirely fair to them. Within their own conceptual framework, given the appropriate cultural and political stimuli, it seems possible that they and other thinkers might have developed the religious case for tolerance. As for the later part of the story, it was the brute contingent fact of the Reformation and the wars of religion that followed it that practically forced militant secularism into being and made possible its successful bid for a monopoly on what counted as public discourse.

If this suggestion has merit, it may be that we are dealing less with an "American discovery" as with a resumption under American circumstances of a doctrinal development deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. On Markham's own account, even the Christendom Group was frequently ambivalent about tolerance and pluralism, with Demant contending that the achievements of liberalism are better supported by Christian faith than by liberal theory. Conspicuously absent from Markham's account is Roman Catholic social doctrine, especially the teaching on religious liberty of the Second Vatican Council and major documents of the present pontificate, such as the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. On questions of truth and tolerance, Catholic teaching has undoubtedly been influenced by "the American discovery" through figures such as John Courtney Murray, but the development of teaching draws on many other sources as well.

Second, Markham knows that tolerance is often viewed as a weak and wimpish virtue, and he urges upon us a stronger sense of tolerance that entails genuine engagement and argument within the bond of civility. It is hard to disagree, but he offers little help in seeing how we get from wimpish tolerance to the tolerance that vigorously engages differences. The American experience, at least at present, is not terribly encouraging on this score (see below on the status of "truth" in our culture). The reason Markham is not as helpful as one might hope on this score is related to my third question. At the end of the day, the reasons he gives for being tolerant tend to depend upon uncertainty and diffidence. In this respect his reasons for tolerance are not unlike those offered by John Stuart Mill. There is nothing wrong with agreeing with Mill when Mill is right, but Mill's arguments for tolerance represent a moderate relativism that, experience demonstrates, ends up in radical relativism. If tolerance is to be well grounded religiously, it must be secured not so much in what we don't know but in what we do know.

In this connection, and without going into detail, Markham does not get quite right what he celebrates as my great contribution to understanding the cognitive implications of Christian eschatology. The fact that history is not yet consummated in the Kingdom, joined to what we know about the diversity of God's creation and the consequences of the fallenness of human nature (including our reason)—all these induce a certain cognitive humility. And that humility is evidenced in an openness to different accounts of the truth, to pluralism. But all of this is premised not upon our uncertainty or ignorance but upon our sure knowledge of, for instance, creation, fall, redemption, and promised consummation. It is because as a Christian I know for sure how the world really is that I know I must respectfully engage and learn from those who disagree with me about how the world really is. It is precisely the Christian account of reality that explains why I do not know all that is to be known and why I can learn also from those who deny the Christian account of reality. This is more than a rhetorical difference with Markham, although it is perhaps that in part. By resting so much of the case for tolerance on the premise of uncertainty, Markham, against his best instincts and

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stated intentions, runs the risk of reinforcing the secular liberalism that he wants to counter. That is, he runs the risk of reinforcing the assumption that the foundation of tolerance is skepticism rather than knowledge of the truth.

A closely related and fourth question has to do with Markham's implicit assumption that religious pluralism is the permanent state of affairs. He disagrees with John Milbank's claim that Christians speak in order to convert. The main weight of his disagreement, as I understand it, is with Milbank's rejection of the possibility of reasoned persuasion across the divides of conflicting worldviews, religious and otherwise. But Markham also seems to throw into question whether Christians should engage others in the hope that they will be converted to Christianity. It is very difficult, to say the least, for an orthodox Christian to disown the hope that everybody will become Christian. In that apparently improbable circumstance, however, the arguments in support of tolerance and pluralism would hardly be obsolete. Ideally conceived, in that case everything that is good, true, and beautiful in the experience of non-Christians would be encompassed and fulfilled under the auspices of Christianity. With that would also come much that is evil, false, and ugly in the human condition, as we know too well from our experience with Christians, beginning with ourselves. Pluralism within a nominally all-Christian world may be more difficult than at present (remember that the wars of religion were, after all, fought between Christians). In any event, Markham's argument will be severely weakened for orthodox Christians if he means to say that true tolerance requires that Christians eschew the hope for conversion.

Fifth and finally, I suspect that Markham makes too much of my own writings on the American religious experience. More precisely, he is in danger of taking my *prescription* of how tolerance ought to be religiously grounded as a *description* of how in fact tolerance is religiously grounded in America. I wish he were more right than I think he is about "the American discovery." Some Americans have made the discovery, I hope many more will, and I do believe that America is singularly situated to demonstrate the truth of the discovery. But we are not at the happy point that Markham sometimes seems to suggest, and there are formidable obstacles in the way of our ever getting there.

For many Christians in America, both Catholic and Protestant, tolerance is simply something to be tolerated. They even feel guilty about being tolerant. If they had the courage of their convictions, they tell themselves, they would be much more aggressively intolerant of those who do not accept the truth that they possess. In addition, there are many more Christians who are indifferent to the question of truth outside the private sphere of "what is true for me." They would not dream of "imposing" their truth on anyone else. This is the vulgar nihilism that makes the mantra of "choice" so devastatingly effective with respect to abortion and other questions of great moral moment. Compounding these confusing dynamics is a still powerful secularist ideology that dominates the political culture and is strongly supported by the judiciary's interpretation of the separation of church and state to mean the separation of religion and, increasingly, the separation of moral discourse from public life. Those who advance that secularist ideology do not, of course, acknowledge that they are imposing their own moral judgments upon the society.

The American experiment is not over, or at least we have no way of knowing whether it is or not. America may yet become, God willing, the history-transforming exemplification of how tolerance can be grounded in truth, including religious truth. It may yet overthrow the tyranny of a humanly truncated and withering secularism that atomizes community and reduces politics to demeaning exercises of the will to power. In sum, America may yet become what Ian Markham thinks, or at least hopes, it already is. If and when it does become that, it will be acknowledged in retrospect that what America is now was in process of becoming what Ian Markham says it is. In that happy event, *Plurality and Christian Ethics* will be acclaimed as prophetically prescient. Meanwhile, I am pleased to recommend it as one of the most intelligently provocative essays on religion and public life to have appeared in a long time.

FT

TO STEP GINGERLY OVER THE CLIFF

Herewith some opinion-surfing on dismal developments (but see below for an exception to the dismal) in the promotion of doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia. Everyone is familiar by now with the decision of federal judge Barbara Rothstein in Seattle striking down a state law that bans assisted suicide. The law is unconstitutional, she said, because "the suffering of a terminally ill person cannot be deemed any less deserving of protection from unwarranted governmental interference than that of a pregnant woman." Richard Brookhiser writes in the *New York Observer*, "The click you heard was the click of an argument completed. For years, opponents of abortion warned that the erosion of vigilance at the beginning of life would lead to

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erosion of vigilance at the end. Now they have been confirmed by the majesty of the law. Justice Harry Blackmun must be sorry that he left the Supreme Court before he could give the decision the highest imprimatur; maybe Justice David Souter will take up the slack for him."

Brookhiser was impressed when some years ago Norman Podhoretz of *Commentary* remarked that this country would not countenance euthanasia. As soon as the baby boomers started turning fifty, he said, they would see to it that this issue stayed off the agenda. "Let us hope he is right," writes Brookhiser, "because the legal and intellectual spades are turning." One recalls Chesterton's observation that the problem with a mad man is not that he is not logical; the problem is that he is *only* logical. The Rothstein decision exhibits that kind of logic. He who says A must say B. He who says *Roe v. Wade* must say assisted suicide.

Rothstein quotes *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* in arguing that deciding to end one's life, like deciding to have an abortion, "involves the most intimate and personal choices a person can make . . . and constitutes a choice central to personal dignity and autonomy." The judge says that the state has an interest in discouraging suicide by young people and others "with a significant life span ahead of them." Brookhiser notes that the judge is not quite prepared to say B. Brookhiser writes, "If intimacy, choice, dignity, and autonomy are the only standards to be invoked, then any potential suicide has a right to seek assistance, just as any woman, under *Roe v. Wade*, has a right to an abortion. Who is to say that depressives have less dignity than cancer patients, or that nineteen-year-olds should have less choice than ninety-year-olds?"

At least with this Administration, however, Brookhiser thinks there is a political logic to tying the right to be killed to the abortion right. Abortion seems to be the one sure anchor of the Administration. On abortion, President Clinton has been adamant. "In the midst of all the switchbacks and backtracks, in the murk of Haiti, Bosnia, health care, and welfare reform, the Administration has never wavered on one issue, and that is abortion," Brookhiser observes. In its first day in office, the Clinton team lifted the so-called gag rule, which had prevented federal money from being used to promote abortion. Later, we were treated to the remarkable spectacle of the President of the United States very publicly intervening to get a pill admitted to the country, the infamous RU-486. Clinton supported and signed a law that imposes draconian penalties on those who nonviolently protest at abortion clinics.

This year the Administration has put on a full court press to line up the entire U.S. diplomatic apparatus in pushing abortion as an integral part of the United Nations program of population control. In the last instance Clinton has, in a perhaps unprecedented way, brought U.S. policy into direct, explicit, and apparently nonnegotiable conflict with the Vatican. The stakes are very high. Over the next few years the Vatican could become the catalyst for a rebellion of many poor nations against what is accurately described as U.S. cultural imperialism advanced through a compliant UN bureaucracy. The imposition of cultural and moral fashions made in the U.S.A. on poor countries has, so far as we can see, provoked not a chirp of protest from those in this country who a few years ago presented themselves as ardent champions of the "third world" against the oppression of the "first world," meaning the U.S.

Abortion, embryo experimentation, fetal transplants, RU-486, population control—these are the issues on which an otherwise flaccid and wobbly Administration is unmovable. And, of course, they are all issues that find their warrant and logic in *Roe v. Wade* and its judicial offspring. In this context, there is not only logic but political astuteness in Judge Rothstein's anchoring of the right to be killed in the abortion liberty's right to kill.

Strip-Mining the Constitution

Charles Krauthammer (who subtitles his reflection, "This is not a slippery slope. It's a cliff.") is exercised about what the Rothstein decision means for democratic governance. "Less than three years ago," he notes, "Washington [State] had a referendum on this very issue. After one of the most vigorous public debates ever held on assisted suicide, the people of Washington decided against the brave new world of mercy killing. Judge Rothstein has now decided they had no right to do so. The spirit of the imperial judiciary having trickled down to Seattle, such niceties as 140 years of tradition and a clearly expressed popular will must not stand in the way of one judge's willful reading of the Constitution." Rothstein wrote that, where a constitutional right is involved, the court cannot leave matters to the legislature or to the people but must boldly accept responsibility for resolving the issue. Says Krauthammer, "What duty. What courage. What chutzpah."

As for Rothstein's invocation of the *Casey* effusions about intimate, personal, and autonomous choices, Krauthammer wonders why the court does not go further. "Why should the state be allowed to interfere with, say, drug-taking? What decision is more private, more 'intimate and personal,' more an expression of personal autonomy than choosing to alter one's own mood and perceptions through a voluntary act?" And where does the court get off, he wonders, limiting assisted suicide to the terminally ill. There are many people who for various reasons and at various times want to end their lives, and want help in doing so. He cites Michigan law professor

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Yale Kamisar, who notes that "it is perverse to allow the relief of suicide to the terminally ill whose suffering is about to end shortly, while denying it to the nonterminal who face endless decades of unrelieved anguish."

Krauthammer's focus, however, is on what all this does to American democracy. "*Roe* is the most spectacular modern example of judicial willfulness. To cite it in a decision that judicially legislates assisted suicide is entirely appropriate. Both decisions strip-mine the Constitution to locate a right never before found and to thereby override the citizenry's right to decide the issue democratically." Krauthammer's conclusion is that of a doleful democrat. "I have no great expectation that over the long run the people and their legislators will firmly hold the line against physician-assisted suicide. But I would rather see the ban overturned by popular will after vigorous debate than by judicial fiat. If the consequences of permitting assisted suicide turn out to be as baleful as I predict, a democratic decision can always be reversed. But with constitutional rights there is no further appeal. . . . As with abortion, all that is left is bitterness, angry demonstrations, and a deep sense of disenfranchisement."

In fact, Rothstein may have, at least by implication, pushed her logic further than some commentaries noticed. In her decision she quotes the decision of a Michigan state judge, Richard Kaufman, who found a right to "rational suicide" whenever "a person's quality of life is significantly impaired by a medical condition [that is] extremely unlikely to improve." "Medical condition" is an exceedingly comprehensive term. Everybody has one. And a condition, whether physical or mental, inevitably impinges upon one's "quality of life." In that case, a rational suicide would seem to be a suicide that someone considers rational. Not necessarily, please note, the person being killed or killing himself. Here, as some disability rights advocates have pointed out, comes the really scary part. The Kaufman decision, which Rothstein cites in support of her decision, invokes as authority the notorious *Buck v. Bell* decision of the Supreme Court in 1927. That decision allowed involuntary sterilization of women who were not ill but "feeble-minded." ("Three generations of imbeciles are enough," wrote Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in the eighty-sixth year of his quality life.)

Not to Worry

Then there is Ronald Dworkin, a legal scholar who for years has been helping us out with these worrying questions. Having taken up residence at the edge of the cliff, he regularly looks into the abyss and reports that there is nothing to worry about. In a long essay on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*, he recognizes the anxiety that assisted suicide may lead to people being pressured to die, or even to being killed involuntarily. Not to worry. States, he says, can effectively regulate against abuses so that the new right to assisted suicide does not get out of hand. He draws the analogy with abortion. "It would be wrong to think that those who are more permissive about abortion and euthanasia are indifferent to the value of life. Rather, they disagree about what respecting that value means. They think that in some circumstances—when a fetus is terribly deformed, for example—abortion may show more respect for life than childbirth."

Presumably Mr. Dworkin knows that there are 1.6 million abortions per year in the U.S. Presumably he knows that it is not a rare incident in extreme cases, that nearly half of all abortions are performed on women who have had abortions before, sometimes several abortions, that it is in many cases the contraceptive of choice and the counted-upon backstop for sexual promiscuity and male flight from responsibility. Presumably he also knows that, because it is declared a constitutional right, there is no regulation of abortion, or at least no regulation that puts an "undue burden" (Sandra Day O'Connor) on a woman's obtaining an abortion. Presumably he knows what has happened in the Netherlands where it is now acknowledged by all that thousands of people are involuntarily dispatched each year, the beneficiaries of assisted "suicide." Ronald Dworkin may be dumb, but he is not stupid. He knows all of the above. Yet he tells us not to worry about the right to doctor-assisted suicide because, as in the case of abortion, government regulation and conscientious citizens will guard against abuse. He obviously thinks the readers of the *New York Times* are stupid.

As for the intellectual and moral delinquencies of what is risibly called the newspaper of record, please note how many months it has been since we last visited the subject in these pages. We are capable of moderate self-restraint. But the *Times* is, alas, pertinent to our subject. As on every other question in the culture war, that paper's partisan rabbling is on the side of putative progress. Name the subject—abortion, school choice, homosexuality, the separation of religion and public life, and did we mention abortion?—the editorial page of the *Times* is the bellwether of the sectarian hard core. On such issues it is pitted against the views of the majority of Americans, in some cases the overwhelming majority.

There is no reason why a paper that pretends to be national has to be "balanced," but it is remarkable that there is not even one regular voice in the *Times* that reflects a sympathetic understanding of opposing judgments. Columnists such as Anna Quindlen and Frank Rich apparently find the abyss to their liking. William Safire is the paper's "conservative" columnist, but he is of the libertarian persuasion and so of little help with the things that

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matter most. A. M. Rosenthal bucks the stereotype from time to time, and, in humorous ways of indirection, Russell Baker is occasionally capable of standing back from his colleagues' fevered orthodoxies. But, with few and rare exceptions, the *Times* is untouched by bothersome nuances when it comes to what is self-evidently correct. The paper is a daily assault of narrow and simplistic partisanship.

The *Times* has been a reliable champion of Dr. Joycelyn Elders, the Surgeon General, on everything from capital punishment for smokers (we exaggerate, but only a little), to condom games in kindergarten (we do not exaggerate), to the joys of gay sex. So it is no surprise that the editorial page shares her views on assisted suicide. The day after the Michigan Court of Appeals reinstated murder charges against Dr. Kevorkian for his role in the deaths of two women, Elders commented that "if Dr. Kevorkian is working with his patients and the family and this is their decision, I do not feel I can step in the middle of that decision. . . . I do not view Dr. Kevorkian as a criminal." She observed that suicide is "a very difficult decision, so we probably need some rules . . . some big global rules. But the decision has to be between the family and that doctor." The phrase "big global rules" bears the satisfying connotation that government-is-going-to-do-something-about-it, while at the same time the General makes clear that nothing should be done to place an undue burden, so to speak, on people helping their friends and family to die.

Task Force Taken to Task

The *Times'* editors go far beyond the views of General Elders, however, being positively enthusiastic about mercy killing. The enthusiasm is enhanced by the prospect that the practice might be discovered as a constitutional right. The *Times* has never come across a new constitutional right that it did not love. Editorial zealotry was only slightly dampened by the report of the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law, which came out strongly opposed to doctor-assisted suicide (on which more below). The task force raised "a number of troubling issues," the editors admit, but they dismiss as "nightmarishly speculative" the fears of the panel that, for instance, some patients might be killed to save the costs of treating them. The editorial, titled "Mercy for the Dying," confidently asserts that the concerns raised by the panel "can be mitigated by appropriate safeguards." The 200-page report, says the *Times*, should be read "as a warning to proceed carefully, not a reason to reject medically assisted suicide." The editors urge us to "start gingerly down the road of assisted suicide and monitor whether it leads to widespread abuse—or to a new frontier of freedom of choice for the desperately ill."

Reading the task force report "as a warning to proceed carefully" is to willfully misread what the task force says. After nine years of studying the question, the twenty-four members concluded—and concluded unanimously—that it would be "profoundly dangerous" to take even one step in the direction urged by the *Times*, the Hemlock Society, and others. "Start gingerly down the road," says the *Times*, and then see whether assisted suicide leads to "widespread abuse." What counts as abuse? Presumably, involuntary euthanasia, the denial of appropriate care because of cost, and other practices flagged by the task force. And how long should the monitoring go on, and how widespread must be the abuse before it is allowed to challenge this "new frontier of freedom of choice." How tolerant does the *Times* want us to be? How many innocent people should we allow to be killed, and what is the tolerable number of patients refused needed care, in order to explore this enticing new frontier? Behind these questions, of course, is the taken-for-granted assumption of the proponents of mercy killing that suicide is immune to moral censure, being but another pro-choice option.

The New York Task Force was established by Governor Mario Cuomo in 1985 and, while it has no legislative authority, its recommendations in the past have carried great weight with legislators and jurists in New York and elsewhere. The unanimous and unequivocal nature of the new report surprised many, since the panel has in the past supported "liberal" measures such as the patient's right to refuse intravenous feeding. Task force members include leading advocates of patient rights who were in this case led to the conclusion that assisted suicide would disempower patients, especially those patients already most powerless. Legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia, the report said, could, among other evils, encourage some doctors to prescribe lethal drugs rather than to treat the pain or depression of severely ill patients. Far from these worries being "nightmarishly speculative," the report very calmly sets forth why, given the structure of medicine today, effective regulation against such abuses is not possible.

Those who are sanguine about coming up with effective regulation and guidelines typically assume that there is a "friend of the family" relationship with the physician, and that medical decisions are made in a personal, reasonable, and compassionate manner. That is not the medical reality for most Americans. Even for the privileged few, however, the task force notes that a "profound dependence characterizes the doctor-patient relationship," and says that some patients and families would feel they had no option if doctors recommended assisted suicide or euthanasia. The steps being agitated in this country have been taken in the Netherlands. In the report's very conservative reading of the Dutch situation, it notes that one percent of all deaths there are by involuntary euthanasia. Extrapolated to the

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population of the United States, that would mean 16,000 patients per year being put to death who did not ask to be killed. Some students of the Dutch practice suggest that the figures for involuntary euthanasia are more than twice those cited by the New York panel.

"No matter how carefully any guidelines are framed, assisted suicide and euthanasia will be practiced through the prism of social inequality and bias that characterize the delivery of services in all segments of society, including health care," the task force says. "The risks to already vulnerable members of our society would be extraordinary, especially in light of the growing cost consciousness about health care. . . . The risks would be most severe for those who are elderly, poor, socially disadvantaged or without access to good medical care." Dr. Mark Chassin, state commissioner of health and chairman of the task force, says, "A humane society owes its citizens something more than a prescription for a quick exit." Especially, one might add, when patients are not at all interested in exiting just yet.

Always to Care

Some of the key considerations set forth by the New York Task Force on Life and the Law are those advanced in the statement of the Ramsey Colloquium, "Always to Care, Never to Kill" (First Things, February 1992). Very importantly, the task force report strongly supports a range of specific measures to improve caring, especially in the relief of pain and depression. A good deal of the agitation for assisted suicide and euthanasia exploits the fact that many doctors do not carefully employ palliatives that are readily available. Organizations such as the Hemlock Society and much of the media routinely use scare tactics, dramatically depicting dyings that are prolonged, wild, and wracked with pain, leading many to think, understandably, that, if this is what awaits them, suicide and euthanasia promise blessed relief.

A striking feature of the New York report is that it realistically recognizes that there will be instances in which doctors help patients to commit suicide. Despite the Hippocratic Oath (which is now falling into desuetude), that has probably always happened. Such instances, however, cannot become the basis for public policy, the task force argues. This realistic understanding that there are some things that are, whether we like it or not, beyond the reach of law and regulation is deeply offensive to a certain rationalistic view of public policy. Any gap between what is legally defined and regulated and what is done in the real world is intolerable to some minds. "Hypocritical" is the charge readily launched.

The thought that some people might, on the shady side of the law, have available to them the "benefit" of assisted suicide or euthanasia while other people do not offends the moral sensibilities of the *Times'* editors who harrumph, "What a limp and unsatisfactory solution." But of course the task force does not claim to have a solution. Arguing from the basis of justice and prudence, the report convincingly makes the case that the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia would be profoundly wrong and dangerous. Only people who have spent too much time staring over the cliff, bemused by the abyss below, are capable of thinking that there is a public policy "solution" for death and dying.

FT

From the People in Charge of Creative Excellence

In Washington $170 million is chicken appetizer, but with that modest budget the National Endowment for the Arts has managed to stir up quite a ruckus from time to time. Most notoriously, there was the late Robert Mapplethorpe's photographic exhibit with bullwhips and penises stuck into sundry orifices. Against the perfectly understandable protest, newspapers and television screamed censorship while refusing themselves to show their audiences the artistic creations they so assiduously defended and thought worthy of public funding. They did show some of Mapplethorpe's lovely photos of flower arrangements, which had absolutely nothing to do with the controversy. Then there was the other much-remarked incident in which the NEA established that it is permissible to exhibit a crucifix in public and at taxpayer's expense, so long as it is immersed in urine.

The *New York Times* recently did a big two-page spread on four performance artists who were refused grants or lost grants during the 1990 brouhaha over NEA. Grants have been restored, with apologies, by the Clinton Administration. One of the artists talks dirty on stage while smearing herself with what looks like the unmentionable, while the other three are homosexual and specialize in assaulting America's homophobia. John Fleck complains, "I became known as the man who masturbated on stage and urinated on the Bible." The *Times* sets things straight: "He simulated masturbation, and he did urinate on stage, but not on a Bible." Well, that puts things in an entirely different light. The story continues: "'My work was constantly misquoted and taken out of context,' Mr. Fleck says. The aspects of his performances that were most likely to offend some segments of his audience seemed to be the only

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ones ever mentioned." That may say something about other aspects of his performance, although masturbating and urinating on stage probably does tend to distract attention from what one is trying to say. Mr. Fleck was very disappointed with his appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." "I was basically introduced as the man who deals with homosexual issues and other skits. I was the sort of avant-garde freak and was made to feel like a disgusting pervert leeching on the taxpayers' money." It seems Ms. Winfrey's show has some educational value after all.

Another of the four, Holly Hughes, writes plays celebrating lesbianism. One play is titled *The Well of Horniness*, and of her newest work the *Times* says that "its title includes a slang term for the clitoris," but the *Times* isn't telling us what the term is. The *Times* isn't that kind of paper, or maybe they think we're not ready to know, but there is no doubt that the play is bold and deserving of tax support. Says Ms. Hughes, "My work has always been about publicly representing or revealing a lesbian experience. My desire has been to have it seen outside of a specifically lesbian context—to become visible, to leave the ghetto, to not be marginalized." In other words, Ms. Hughes would like to be rich and famous. She goes on about how awful Americans are for not properly rewarding her for telling them how awful they are. The story says that her saddest experience of recent years has been her father's death in Michigan last summer. She complains, "A third of his obituary unfortunately was about me." Somebody has to pay the price for her becoming "visible." The story concludes: "Ms. Hughes received a $9,375 NEA grant this year. It is her third grant from the agency since 1990."

The same week as the *Times* story on these victims of censorship, the *Economist* ran a puff piece on Jane Alexander, Clinton's chairman of the NEA. She takes seriously the criticisms of the NEA, although the *Economist* is glad to say that she is not neglecting her artistic constituents, noting her defense of a grant to "an HIV-positive artist whose performance involves bloodletting and ritual scarring." Ms. Alexander says the NEA should be less elitist and should, for instance, encourage art as a way of addressing problems in urban schools. Helen Brunner, head of the National Associaton of Artists Organizations, says that the NEA needs to "create a balance between education and creative excellence." Ms. Brunner says, "They need to be sure they don't throw the baby out with the bath water." As for combatting urban turmoil with art, she observes, "You can't solve all the ills in this country with $170 million." One can tell from the way they think and talk that these are people who know a lot about creative excellence.

FT

Jews, Christians, and "The Great Fear"

It is a sad thing to see a considerable talent wasted. Joseph Sobran has considerable talent, as was evident for many years in his writings for *National Review*, the *Human Life Review*, and in his own syndicated column. We get asked what happened to Joe Sobran. The publicly relevant answer is that in his writing he became ever more abrasively strident about what he views as the sinister influence of Jews in American life, and the alleged captivity of U.S. foreign policy to the "Jewish lobby" working on behalf of Israel. For a long time, friends tried to help Sobran get over this fixation, and nobody tried harder than William F. Buckley of *National Review*. Sobran took such efforts as evidence that his erstwhile friends, too, were under the spell of what he calls the "invisible" Jewish influence. In the past year Sobran has published vicious attacks against Buckley and others who he claims have succumbed to "The Great Fear," meaning fear of displeasing the Jews.

The subject of anti-Semitism is weary and wearying. The dynamics that impel it are sordid and debased, and those who get involved in the discussion of it risk being soiled. A good argument can be made for simply averting one's eyes, for not lifting the rock to see what is underneath. But Sobran's writings are not under a rock. They appear in publications that cannot be lightly dismissed as entirely beyond the fringe, and have led even sensible people to observe that, while they do not necessarily agree with him, you have to give Sobran credit for having the "courage" to say things that others are afraid to mention.

Typical is a recent column titled "The Great Fear" in which Sobran observes, "There is little active hostility to Jews in America, which is as it should be. But there is also very little public criticism of Jewish politics, which is another matter." In politics and the news media, says Sobran, Buckley and others (whom he derisively calls "Judaeo-Christians") are effectively silenced by the threat of being charged with anti-Semitism, a charge "dreaded like Jove's thunderbolts." Thus the media say little or nothing about Jews who committed treason for the Soviet Union or Israel because that would raise "sensitive questions about Jewish loyalties and their consequences for America." Jews, writes Sobran, can bash the Christian right and Catholic Church to their hearts' content, while "the organized though amorphous Jewish power" intimidates Christians into a "craven conduct" that he describes as "toadying to Jews."

Then there is this in parenthesis: "(It is of course important to bear in mind that most Jews aren't responsible for this, and it is morally and

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intellectually wrong to blame them indiscriminately; but I assume I am speaking to grownup Christians here.)" He lets off the hook "Jews who were ready to help me when some of my Judaeo-Christian friends were in full flight" after the unpleasantness with Buckley. But the more general Jewish reality is something else, according to Sobran. "Bill in effect warned me that Jewish power would try to wreck my career if I didn't shut up. I didn't and it did." It is this "Jewish power" that Sobran has in mind when he writes, "American public disclosure is being quietly and constantly warped by unseen pressures." His conclusion: "The older I get, the more I am impressed by this pervasive fear of the Jews—or rather, pervasive in some critical power centers, unfelt in other places. It is a huge factor, invisible and incalculable, in American culture and politics."

"Amorphous," "pervasive," "invisible"—it is all very sinister. In defense of Sobran, someone might point out that he is not saying that the influence of Jews is sinister; it is the *fear* of the influence of Jews that is sinister. But that would be entirely disingenuous. Sobran's claim is that Jewish power is feared because Jewish power is fearful. Not for nothing do those who know what's good for them engage in the "craven conduct" of "toadying to Jews." Few and brave are those who, like Joe Sobran, dare to speak the truth and let the chips fall where they may.

Persisting Puzzlements

When faced by screeds such as Sobran's, attention must be paid. Not too much attention, and not too often, but anti-Semitism—although the term has been cheapened by careless use—remains a legitimate and serious concern. All the evidence indicates that anti-Semitism is a small and declining phenomenon in America. Jews are secure in America, not chiefly because of Jewish organizations waging war on anti-Semites, but because of the generously extended good will of the Christian majority. Yet it would be beyond belief were there not problems inherent in a circumstance where only 2 percent of the population is Jewish and close to 90 percent identify themselves as Christian. In the light of historical experience and the balance of communal interests, it is not paranoid for Jews to worry about their security, although there are no doubt Jewish paranoids. At the same time, and despite their good will and firm rejection of anti-Semitism, many Christians are puzzled by aspects of Jewish influence in our public life. That puzzlement provides an opportunity for exploitation by those who really are anti-Semites.

The puzzlement is not about the remarkable success of Jews in American life. Anti-Semites speak in sinister terms about the disproportionate (they say "inordinate") number of Jews in high places, as though they were revealing dark secrets. Most Americans are unperturbed by the large number of Jews at the top levels of, for instance, the news and entertainment media, the medical and legal professions, and prestigious centers of higher education. Far from being resentful, most Christians are admiring of Jewish success, attributing it, variously, to superior intelligence, determination, or God's election of Israel. The puzzlement, and the opportunity for anti-Semitic exploitation, is in the perception of Jews as being militantly secularist and hostile to Christian sensibilities and moral convictions.

This puzzlement is not new, but it is being exacerbated today. Religious Jews are more keenly aware than anyone of the inroads of secularism in American Jewry. Orthodox and Conservative leaders have long worried about the loss of Jewish "identity," and today they are joined by many Reform leaders, although in the case of the last "identity" would seem to be more a matter of tribe than Torah. Sobran and his like break no new ground when they point out that Jewish organizations frequently feel free to attack Christian groups—especially evangelical Protestant and Catholic—with impunity, while crying "anti-Semitism" in response to any criticism of Jews. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), to take an obvious example, is very largely directed by secular Jews and is committed to a militantly secularizing course in law and public policy. One is quite free, however, to say that the ACLU is grotesquely wrong without indulging in reckless talk about the "invisible and incalculable" influences of "amorphous Jewish power."

Another recent example is a book published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America*. The book is a vicious attack, a slash-and-burn job, on evangelical Protestants involved in conservative politics. It is a very bad thing for an anti-defamation league to engage in defamation. The book includes some smarmy allowances that, of course, these conservative Christians have a right to participate in the political process, but the message is that their religious fanaticism is aimed at destroying that process. *The Religious Right* is a shameful book that has no plausible purpose other than advancing the liberal Democratic goal of turning politically conservative Christians into a pariah group and thus forcing the Republican Party to distance itself from a large part of its natural constituency. In short, in this book the ADL is playing political games with religious bigotry.

It is noteworthy that a substantial number of prominent Jews have protested the ADL defamation very strongly and very publicly. These Jewish voices point out that it is ludicrous and self-destructive for an organization representing but a fraction of the

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fraction of the population that is Jewish to, in effect, declare war on millions of Christians because it disagrees with their political positions. They also note, not so incidentally, that evangelical Protestants have over the years been among the strongest backers of U.S. support for Israel. In addition, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has protested the ADL smear in no uncertain terms. This, contra the Sobrans, hardly fits a pattern of "toadying to Jews." Beyond the ADL's misrepresentation of Christian political activism, the NAE is rightly indignant because it has in recent years cooperated with the ADL in a dialogue aimed at building greater trust and understanding between evangelicals and Jews. In such a dialogue, both sides risk some tension with their own constituencies. With the publication of *The Religious Right*, ADL seems to leave no doubt that, when it comes to a choice between partisan politics and Christian-Jewish understanding, partisan politics wins hands down.

Jewish Rethinkings

The Jewish community is hardly monolithic. Indeed, there is considerable ambiguity in the term "community." Sixty percent of Jews in the U.S. have no connection with any Jewish organization, religious or secular. And among the organizations there are very significant differences. At its annual meeting in Washington this year, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) invited this writer to address a plenary session on the role of Jews in American public life. We presented as candidly and persuasively as we could our by now familiar argument that the naked public square—public life devoid of religion and religiously based moral argument—is a dangerous place for everybody, and especially for minorities. There was no trimming of the contention that, for the last half century, major Jewish organizations had made a grave mistake by uncritically identifying with an extreme "strict separationist" line on the place of religion in our public life. In response, the AJC did not, of course, promptly do a volte-face on these questions, but the message was respectfully engaged, indicating a measure of openness to rethinking how Jews ought to be disposed toward the religio-cultural circumstances of American life.

Those who associate the entirety of American Jewry with the aggressive secularism of the ACLU need to be alerted to such intense debates going on among Jewish Americans. For instance, *American Jews & the Separationist Faith: The New Debate on Religion in Public Life*, edited by David G. Dalin (Ethics and Public Policy Center), includes forty Jewish thinkers reflecting, often in quite fresh ways, on how Jews and Christians should define their interests and obligations in the American social order. All this hardly fits Sobran's complaint. He writes: "It would be one thing if we simply had an explicit rule that criticism of Israel and Jewish political power is taboo. But an open taboo is almost a contradiction in terms: The essence of a taboo is the pretense that no subject is really being avoided, that (so to speak) there is no subject *there*. The power is immensely increased because it goes unmentioned, unmeasured, uncriticized. You can't even talk back to it if you can't talk *about* it." One obvious response is that Joe Sobran, alas, is talking about it. A problem with his talking about it is his pretense that many others, Christians and Jews, are not talking about it. Another important difference is that, unlike Sobran, they are talking about it not in order to sow resentment and suspicion but to build a more secure foundation for an American future in which Jews and Christians can flourish together.

Sobran is very particularly exercised that the Jewish cabal permits no criticism of Israel. What does this man read? Most of the publications of the political left are incessantly critical of Israel and its policies. Establishmentarians such as Tony Lewis, columnist of the *New York Times*, bash Israel and its alleged oppression of its neighbors with a regularity that suggests they have but to punch a key on the computer to produce the standard paragraphs of polemic. To be sure, those who criticize Israel get criticized in turn, but they do not get dragged off to the gulag, and, so far as we can see, their careers, far from being "wrecked," are doing very nicely, thank you. Admittedly, there is a limit. Those who criticize Israel and U.S. policy toward Israel must give believable evidence that they really care about the security of Israel. What security means in terms of specific policies is eminently debatable, but writers who seem not to care, who seem to be hostile to the very existence of Israel, are viewed as being beyond the pale, and rightly so. There is a taboo and, contra Sobran, it is open, explicit, and morally imperative. Among decent people, the imperative to guard against the possible destruction of three million more Jews is not an open question. If that be censorship, it is but another good argument for censorship. Moreover, it is unseemly for people who knowingly violate taboos to complain that there is a price to be paid.

Sobran presents himself as a serious Catholic, and his ruminations appear each week in the *Wanderer*, an influential publication on the Catholic right. His flirtation with anti-Semitic language and sentiment cannot be squared with Catholic teaching on the connection between Jews and Christians. Or perhaps he thinks the Church, and this Pope in particular, are guilty of "toadying to Jews." As was already suggested by Pius XII, if we are Christians at all, we are Judeo-Christians. There is no way to be Christian other than in relationship to the covenant with Abraham and with those whom John Paul II has repeatedly called "our elder brothers" in Living Judaism.

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Jews and Christians are providentially entangled with one another. Because many Jews and many Christians do not understand that, the relationship will continue to be very difficult at times. We in America have a historically unique opportunity—and therefore obligation—to construct bonds of understanding conducive to the civil and spiritual flourishing of Christians and Jews alike. Nowhere else in the world are there enough Christians and Jews so situated as to be able to redefine their relationship in obedience to the God of Israel. Christians should indeed be motivated by "The Great Fear"—not the fear of allegedly sinister Jewish power, but the fear of betraying a moment of opportunity and obligation that has never happened before and, if betrayed, may never happen again.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Reliably picking up on the latest, the Doonesbury strip of June 8 has a homosexual character assert, "For 1,000 years the Church sanctioned rituals for homosexual marriages." His friend responds, "Oh well, sure, Catholics. They have a ritual for everything." For many things, but not for that. The strip is informed, so to speak, by John Boswell's latest book contending that Christianity, before its fall into homophobia, had a benign view of homosexual relations. The book will be receiving critical notice in a forthcoming issue. As for the credibility of Dr. Boswell in the community of scholars, readers might want to consult "In the Case of John Boswell" (March 1994). There is a ritual for cartoonists who propagandize on behalf of immoral behavior. (Confessions are heard at noon, five p.m., and by appointment.)

■ Russell Kirk had been ill for several months. A friend tells us that, on the night before his death, Russell requested a book from the library for bedtime reading. He asked for *All's Well That Ends Well*. The phrase "death with dignity" is much abused, but sometimes it seems appropriate.

■ Just when you thought you had read everything you need to read about the infamous and incoherent Supreme Court decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, along comes this 122-page blockbuster by Paul Benjamin Linton in *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* (Vol. XIII, No. 1). Scholars and those involved in abortion-related litigation can obtain a copy from Americans United for Life, 343 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60604.

■ "STOP JOB DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY AMERICANS." That's the heading of a full-page ad in the *New Republic* signed by many prominent citizens. Among the religious figures signing on: Bishop Edmond L. Browning (Episcopal Church), Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom (ELCA Lutheran), William Sloane Coffin, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton (Detroit), Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler (Union of American Hebrew Congregations), and President Paul Sherry (United Church of Christ). The statement calls for federal laws prohibiting discrimination against gays and lesbians in the workplace. Presumably, "workplace" would include religious institutions. And inevitably, as recent history demonstrates, laws against discrimination will require goals and quotas that must be met as evidence that an organization is not discriminating. There is every reason to suppose that those who signed the statement know that and have no problems with it. The statement was sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a leading political lobby of the homosexual movement.

■ In the last couple of years, one group that has been showing up at pro-life rallies takes all sides by a bit of surprise. It is called the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians (PLAGAL) and their literature represents a distinctive take on why Americans should rally to the defense of the vulnerable. Reports are that PLAGAL activists have been generously received by other pro-lifers, despite emphatic disagreement about homosexuality. For information, write PLAGAL, P.O. Box 33292, Washington, D.C. 20033.

■ The conventional claim of any group aspiring to official victim status is that they are not seeking remedy by quota system; they only want to end discrimination against them. Some of those who make that claim may honestly believe it, but, regrettably, in today's world of victim entitlements it is nonsense. Catholic Charities of San Francisco may lose $1.5 million in AIDS contracts because its board of directors balked at a city requirement that its members disclose their sexual orientation. City officials say that the rule ensures that service providers are sympathetic to their target populations. Catholic Charities says that the sexual orientation of board and staff members is a private matter. The organization follows a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. This does not satisfy the city. You have to prove that you don't discriminate. You prove it by having the requisite number of gays on your board and staff. If you do not have the requisite number, you must agree to a "good faith goal," a.k.a. a quota. It follows that you must discriminate in order to prove that you do not discriminate. Because the city is so concerned about being sensitive to the target population, it is holding up a $412,000 contract for a

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residential program that provides care for homeless and destitute AIDS patients. Those who suffer by the program's loss may take satisfaction in knowing that their loss is the gain of homosexuals who want jobs with Catholic Charities. Or, more likely, want to take over Catholic Charities. All in the name of sensitivity, to be sure. Be sensitive or I'll put you out of business.

■ "But, clearly, we continue to move forward and upward as a people and a state." That from Mario Cuomo's new book, *The New York Idea: An Experiment in Democracy* (Crown). There is much more like that. For instance: "Without the willingness to see our own good in the good of the whole community, we will not achieve all we should. We cannot afford to lose the next generation to drugs, or AIDS, or inadequate education—even if they're not your children, or mine, they are our children. There can be no separate city. No man is an island. No woman. No race. No neighborhood. No town. No state. No nation. Our future will be determined by how well we bring together all the parts. From our uncertain origins, through billions of years of evolution that still remain largely a mystery, a chain of life has connected the countless fragments of the universe, reconciling apparent contradictions. From water came vegetation, evolving into new and more complex forms, eventually into living organisms, the higher forms of life, and finally to human beings—with minds, souls, the capacity to think and then to think better. Out of a struggle for survival, human beings, understanding their need for one another, came together, creating clans, tribes, villages, then nations and whole civilizations, progressing in fits and starts, inexorably toward the light." In his stirring conclusion this politician who journalists hail as the closest we have seen in a long time to the ideal of the philosopher king urges us "to live by the sweet wisdom that E. B. White offered us years ago: 'New York is to the nation what the white church spire is to the village—the visible symbol of aspiration and faith, the white plume saying the way is up.' Excelsior!" One suspects that most Americans, and perhaps most New Yorkers, would have some rather imaginative suggestions as to what the Governor might do with his plume. In any event, as of this writing it appears that Cuomo will be reelected to his 26th term, or whatever it is. The Republican ticket, except for Herb London as Comptroller, is on Cuomo's side with respect to abortion and other issues in the culture war. London is also on the Right to Life line and, if he gets enough votes there, he would be the highest elected Republican in state government. Observers point out that he would then be in a position to reshape a party that could seriously challenge the knight of the white plume. But how we would miss what the journalistic herd persists in describing as Mario Cuomo's mastery of rhetoric.

■ The Pope John Center in Braintree, Mass., sponsors this annual gathering of bishops and makes available tapes of presentations by notables—including, this year, Hadley Arkes, Michael Medved, Joyce Little, Fr. Augustine DiNoia, and this writer. The theme is "Celebrating the Year of the Family." For more information, write Leila Harrington Little, Pope John Center, 186 Forbes Road, Braintree, MA 02184.

■ As the Rwanda catastrophe ground on from day to day, it seemed unlikely the news would bring anything new. One's mind becomes coarsened. You've seen one genocide you've seen them all. But then there was this. It was not exactly new, being but a story on another thousand or so people slaughtered, Tutsis hacked to death by Hutus. A reporter, Ian Fisher, caught up with some of the survivors at a camp. He reports, "There were very few women and no infants. 'They could not run fast enough with the children, so they were the first to be killed,' said Eric Nzabihimana, 28, a teacher, who said his parents and five brothers and sisters had been killed." The women with the children could not run fast enough, so they were killed. Mr. Nzabihimana explained, "We have had nothing to eat, so we had no strength to defend ourselves or to run." But that does not really explain. The men did have the strength to run, and they ran. They did leave the women and children behind to fend for themselves, to be killed. Confronted by unimaginable horror, who of us can know for sure what he would do? But it seems unimaginable that one would explain to a stranger, in a manner matter of fact, that the reason the women and children were killed is that they couldn't run as fast as we could. "Maybe," one can all too easily imagine Mr. Nzabihimana continuing, "the women could have run as fast but, you see, they had to take care of the children. Well, we all know how women are, they wouldn't leave the children behind to be killed, you see. They're not like us, are they, sir?" That one sentence—"They could not run fast enough with the children, so they were the first to be killed"—made for hard praying that day.

■ The *Forward* is a self-consciously secular Jewish paper, but upon his death it had some appreciative things to say about Rebbe Menachem Schneerson, whom many Lubavitchers hoped would be the Moshiach, or Messiah. The editorial concludes with this: "There's a lot of talk about a crisis of confidence in the Lubavitcher community now that the man many believed to have been the Messiah has passed on. Our own hope is that they stand their ground and continue to place their faith in America." Thou shalt have no other gods before it.

■ "Church attendance is notoriously over-reported

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as a socially desirable activity, so true attendance figures are surely lower than those reported," says Humphrey Taylor, president of the Louis Harris poll. This is one of several challenges in the past year to what is thought to be one of the most stable social factors in American life: four out of ten adult Americans attend church or synagogue each week. Interestingly, the Harris poll makes much of their finding that the number of adults saying they attended at least weekly dropped from 51 percent in 1986 to 43 percent in 1994. In the polling that it has been doing since the 1930s, Gallup never had a figure as high as 51 percent and only in 1989 was it 43 percent for weekly attendance. The difference is that Gallup does not just ask people whether they go to church weekly but asks about a very specific week, and Gallup asks the question several times during the year in order to adjust for seasonal changes. Stung by those who claim that respondents say they went to church when they didn't, Gallup tested a more stringent question, asking people to name the church or synagogue they had attended within the last seven days. In response to the standard question, the figure was 41 percent, while it was 40 percent in response to the more stringent question, which is not a statistically meaningful difference. Gallup stands by its six decades of research on this question, and offers some thoughts on why some people persist in challenging it: "Whether or not you happen to be one of the four persons in ten who does attend pretty much depends upon who you are and where you are. Most reporters for the national media, for example, tend to be young, live in large cities like New York or Los Angeles, and when they do attend services they usually go to places where the congregation is largely white. That is a fairly good profile of the people least likely to attend worship services." Realities are very different in the South and Southwest, in smaller cities and rural areas, and among blacks and more traditional ethnic communities. The Gallup data and explanation are persuasive. The confusion would seem to arise from the circumstance that those who tell us that "the times they are a'changing" and consider themselves to be the experts on what they claim is a rapidly changing society just cannot abide the fact that something so fundamental as church attendance stubbornly refuses to change.

■ Of course it is very gratifying that FIRST THINGS has more readers who actually pay to get it than any other publication in the country that deals in a serious way with religion and society. But libraries are also a very important part of the support base for a publication. Public libraries, college libraries, departmental libraries, parish libraries, any kind of library. For publications that have been around for seventy-five years or more, libraries are sometimes the most important part of their subscription base. We've only been around for five years. We hope and expect that most of the readers of FT will continue to be individual subscribers. But the really nice thing about library subscriptions is that they tend to renew automatically without requiring additional promotional costs on the part of the publication. The difficult thing about library subscriptions is that libraries don't subscribe unless they get requests for a particular publication. And that, obviously, is where you come in. Most of our readers have some connection with a library that is not but should be subscribing to FT. Please call, drop a note, winsomely request, adamantly demand, or launch a protest demonstration to get a librarian of your acquaintance to subscribe today. We thank you. Our circulation manager thanks you. Your fellow readers who count on the flourishing of this journal thank you. That's a lot of thanks.

Sources: On Judge Rothstein's decision allowing voluntary suicide: Richard Brookhiser, *New York Observer*, May 23, 1994 and Charles Krauthammer, *Washington Post*, May 13, 1994; Joycelyn Elders quoted in *Life at Risk*, May 1994; editorial "Mercy for the Dying," *New York Times*, May 28, 1994. On performance artists, *New York Times*, June 5, 1994; on Jane Alexander, *Economist*, June 4, 1994. Joseph Sobran column "The Great Fear," *Wanderer*, June 9, 1994.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Ad against gay discrimination, *New Republic*, June 13, 1994. On Catholic Charities of San Francisco, *National & International Religion Report*, May 30, 1994. On Rwanda, *New York Times*, July 1, 1994. On the Lubavitcher Rebbe, *Forward*, June 17, 1994. Figures on church attendance, *emerging trends*, May 1994, Princeton Religion Research Center.

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SHOULD JEWS FEAR THE "CHRISTIAN RIGHT"?

On June 9, 1994, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) issued a report entitled *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America.* We are a group of Jews who wish to make it known that we reject the implications of this report and deplore its publication.

We do not question that it is the proper role of the Anti-Defamation League to identify the enemies of the Jewish community. Jewish tradition, and indeed Jewish law, demand that the first concern of our communal organizations be the protection and survival of the community.

But the so-called "evidence" of a conservative Christian threat to Jewish security is derived from such discreditable techniques as insinuation and guilt by association. Thus the report uses the words and actions of a few marginal extremists to impeach individuals and groups whose only crime seems to be the seriousness with which they act on their Christian convictions.

It ill behooves an organization dedicated to fighting against defamation to engage in defamation of its own.

Insofar as the objections to the religious Right are honestly presented in the ADL report, they are mainly political ones: Christian conservatives advocate positions that run counter to many people's beliefs about such issues as abortion, school prayer, homosexual rights, and the meaning of the First Amendment.

And not only do Christian conservatives advocate these positions, but in recent years they have begun to organize, publicize, and attempt to elect candidates sympathetic to their views. This is no different from what many other groups, including Christian liberals, have always done. By what proper definition of the term, then, does the political activity of Christian conservatives constitute an assault on pluralism?

The separation of church and state is not the same thing as the elimination of religious values and concepts from political discourse.

Moreover, Judaism is not, as the ADL seems to suggest, coextensive with liberalism. Nor, we wish to emphasize, does the Jewish community speak with one voice on the religious and moral—and political—issues of our time.

Above all, on the issue with which this community does speak in one voice, namely, the survival of Israel, the Jews have no more stalwart friends than evangelical Christians. Judaism teaches the principle of *Hakarat Hatov*, that we have the duty to acknowledge the good done to us. In issuing *The Religious Right* the ADL has among other things seriously violated that principle.

For all these reasons, we call on our fellow Jews to reject this study. As a people whose history so vividly illustrates the bitter results of bigotry, we have a special obligation to guard against it, and all the more so when, as in the case of the ADL attack on our Christian fellow citizens, it emanates from within our own community.

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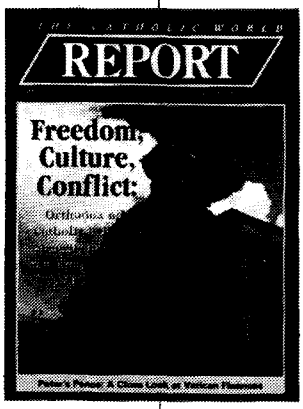
"A Great Catholic Magazine on the Cutting Edge of the Culture War"

— Congressman Robert K. Dornan

SURELY YOU REMEMBER THE RECENT BUILD-UP IN THE "MAINSTREAM" MEDIA ABOUT THE BATTLE BETWEEN HOMOSEXUAL MILITANTS AND "THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT" — SUPPORTED BY CARDINAL JOHN O'CONNOR — FOR SEATS ON NEW YORK CITY'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD? WHAT YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER, HOWEVER, IS THE RESULT.

That's because the homosexuals and their allies were defeated — candidates *opposed* to indoctrinating kindergartners with homosexual propaganda won the majority of seats. So, suddenly, the media's front page, prime-time *cause célebre du jour* had become a non-story. Media bias is nothing new — but at least you used to be able to read between the lines for the real story.

But in ***Catholic World Report***, we gave major coverage to the battle over the New York schools. Every issue of the ***Catholic World Report*** is full of news, articles, and features — and lots of photos — you won't find anywhere else. Our task is to examine major events and crises in the light of Catholic teaching.



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